

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN UGANDA:
THE CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR ACHIEVING
QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE PROVISION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED BY
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, and is a result of my own work, except stated otherwise. This work has not been submitted to any other academic institution other than the University of Edinburgh.

May 2008

DEDICATION

To my parents Mr. David Livingston Baidhye Isabirye and Mrs. Anna Kitimbo Isabirye

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ABSTRACT

The importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as a prerequisite for national development has been emphasized in recent years by developing countries and by donor agencies. Research findings point to the benefits children, as well as nations, derive from ECCE provision. For children, these benefits include school readiness; and for nations, benefits address the reduction of social inequality, possibilities for increased tax revenue through eventual improved employment prospects, and development of societal values. In 1990 at Jomtien in Thailand, 155 nations of the world agreed on a joint plan of action to fulfill six Education For All goals. The first goal required nations to work towards the expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE by the year 2015. The responsibility of poor countries was to make necessary budget allocations and policy commitments; rich countries were to provide both intellectual and financial support. Whilst some progress has been made, many developing countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa are still at risk of not achieving EFA by 2015. Uganda is one country where there are difficulties in attaining EFA and ECCE in particular. This has been exacerbated by the prevailing economic, social, geographical, and cultural differences, as well as general beliefs about ECCE.

This study investigates the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. It explores the extent to which Uganda has expanded and improved ECCE and raises the key question as to why even with international donor support and government commitment to institutional changes, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems. The study uses participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and photography in six selected schools in three Districts. Research findings reveal that the majority of children are not accessing ECCE provision, while many of those that do are being educated in environments not conducive to their learning and development. Findings show that there are a number of factors both internal and external to Uganda that impact upon efforts to fulfil the commitment made at Jomtien in 1990.

This research concludes that first and foremost, there should be a national, 'Ugandan' approach to and policies about ECCE. Rather than being led by international pressure and policies, approaches to improving quality and accessibility in ECCE provision should be re-focused away from 'top-heavy', 'lop-sided' approaches to a more pre-school-level focused approach. This will help in establishing and addressing culturally relevant and economically achievable quality targets. Secondly, there is need for public awareness of the importance of

ECCE. This will not only give rise to increased community participation in the establishment of community-based ECCE centres, but also the involvement of stakeholders in the identification and implementation of solutions to the problems facing ECCE. And finally, rather than looking to the West for funding, Uganda should develop in-country funding strategies from both public and private sources. This will help to remove the negative impact of 'modalities', these often being required by external donor funding. In-country funding sources will as a result give Uganda room to 'manoeuvre' when planning for ECCE.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AOET	Aids Orphans Education Trust
CBO	Community Based Organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DEO	District Education Officer
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECDVU	Early Childhood Development Virtual University
EFA	Education For All
ESA	Education Standards Agency
GDP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ITEK	Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo
LC	Local Council
MII	Management Inspection Instrument
MOES	Ministry Of Education and Sports
NAEYC	National Association of the Education of Young Children
NCC	National Council for Children
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGO	Non Governmental Organization

OAU	Organization of Africa Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TLII	Teaching and Learning Inspection
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPAC	Uganda National Action for Children
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VAT	Value Added Tax
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Discoveries in brain science and child development over the past decade have indicated the importance that Early Childhood Care and Education plays in children's development and the ability to succeed in school and later life (Musturd, 2007; Young, 2007; Early Childhood Education Taskforce, 2005; Edwards, 1999). Findings have shown that children who are exposed to good quality ECCE are provided with a solid base for lifelong learning; it helps them to develop capacity and knowledge, skills and self-confidence, and a sense of social responsibility. Such findings have led governments the world over to adopt initiatives to ensure that children gain access to quality ECCE programs prior to starting formal schooling. This they frequently try to adhere to by organising ECCE within the framework of free public education. Countries like the United Kingdom, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, and Iceland, view ECCE as a government responsibility. In addition to helping families to access ECCE provision for children as early as one year through school fees subsidy, such countries ensure that children from the age of three pass through some form of good quality ECCE. Emphasis is placed on attributes like clear philosophies and goals; good physical environments; developmentally appropriate and effective pedagogy and curriculum; attention to basic and special needs; respect for families and communities; professionally prepared teachers; and rigorous program evaluation (Jalongo *et al.*, 2004).

But obviously, not all countries have reached the same level of development in this regard. The percentage of children passing through ECCE programs varies considerably between the industrialised and less industrialised countries. In the more developed countries, over 69.9% of all children attend some form of ECCE, while in the developing world the percentage stands at only 10.8%. Europe alone has over 77.3 % of children attending ECCE programs, as compared to countries of Sub-Saharan Africa with a figure of only 9.2% (Jouen, 1999; World Education Report, 2000).

The difference in the number of children accessing ECCE programs in developed and developing countries could be attributed to a number of factors such as political stability, well performing economies, good governance in terms of transparency and accountability, public

knowledge of the importance of ECCE, substantial urban population, priority setting, and overall government commitment.

Generally, progress towards providing accessible and quality ECCE in Africa regardless of economic, social, geographical, and cultural differences has been very limited. Yet given the importance of children attending quality ECCE prior to attending formal schooling, there is growing 'fear' that Africa in general and Uganda in particular risks producing less equitable, less productive and a less secure society for the future. Such concern has resulted in a number of global initiatives over the years, in an attempt to change the plight of Africa's younger generation and ultimately Africa's future. The most significant initiative was in the year 1990 at a conference in Jomtien, Thailand. One hundred and fifty-five nations of the world set themselves the challenge, by agreeing on a plan of action to expand and improve comprehensive ECCE For All by the year 2015. Both poor and rich nations recognised their respective responsibilities in reaching this Education For All goal. The responsibility of poor countries was to make necessary budget allocations and policy commitments, while rich countries were to provide both intellectual and financial support. Ten years later in 2000, the international community came together again at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, to examine the results of the decade and to re-affirm the vision set out in Jomtien in 1990. The results were that ECCE had expanded modestly, and mainly in urban areas. The 2003-2004 report was not very 'promising' either. It showed that the majority of countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, were still at risk of not achieving EFA by 2015, as most governments do not feel obliged to provide this level of education (EFA global monitoring report 2003-2004). Uganda is not different in this regard.

This thesis therefore derives from an analysis of the extent to which Uganda has expanded and improved ECCE and raises the key question as to why even with international donor support and government commitment to institutional changes, ECCE is an area of education still faced with problems.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One outlines the development of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Uganda tracing it from the pre-colonial era (the period before the 1830's) to the post colonial era (1962 and beyond). It particularly looks at its 'make-up' as far as quality and accessibility is concerned. It concludes by pointing out two things: that there were tangible differences in pre-school provision in the pre-colonial era compared to that provided in the colonial era; and also that post colonial ECCE provision continued to imitate the colonial rather than the pre-colonial approach to educating children.

Chapter Two explores international perspectives and global concerns with regard to the issue of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. It shows the role that the international community has played in an attempt to ensure the expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter also links the international community's concern for both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision, to the overwhelming body of research that points to the importance of children accessing quality ECCE prior to starting formal schooling and how a country as a whole benefits. But intervention by the international community, though helpful, has been criticised. A discussion is therefore presented on the arguments put forward that interpret such concern and subsequent involvement, as in fact a 'hindrance' to both quality and accessibility.

Chapter Three reviews the different steps that the government of Uganda has taken towards 'honouring' her commitment to achieving the first of the six EFA goals. It shows that since 1990, Government involvement in the ECCE sub-sector has increased, suggesting the positive impact of the Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) conferences. This chapter also reveals that amidst the progress made, government involvement in the 'operational life' of pre-school programs has remained minimal, as efforts have been geared mainly at the institutional level. It also shows how such limited involvement has continued to negatively impact upon both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision.

Chapter Four discusses research methods used in this study. Before going to the field, I extensively studied and reviewed literature from international documents, as well as documents written by various researchers and educationalists. In the field, I collected additional secondary data from Uganda national library in Kampala, the special collections section at Makerere University Library, government departments, and national and

international agencies. Primary data was gathered through a qualitative methodology using case study, interviews, participatory observation and photography. Qualitative methods helped to successfully gather, analyze and discuss data, and in the subsequent presentation of recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter Five and Six present research findings on the prevailing quality and inaccessibility in ECCE programs. Research findings in Chapter Five reveal that children are still being educated in environments that could be described as inadequate. Chapter Five also illustrates the effect that the present quality is having on children's overall learning and development. Chapter Six discusses contributory factors to the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. It reveals that economic, social, as well as political factors have all contributed to the underdevelopment of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda.

Chapter Seven presents what this thesis describes as the 'model' that could be the 'answer' to Uganda's effort to attain both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. This 'model' pre-school is a community initiative, but one that bears the quality marks as defined by the international community. The quality marks are contextualized or 'Ugandanized', making them culturally relevant and economically achievable.

Chapter Eight provides the final summary and conclusion of the study. The argument is developed that, as well as looking to the donor agencies, Uganda's future of achieving both quality and accessible ECCE lies in 're-visiting' her past, that is, adopting an 'active community involvement strategy' in ECCE provision.

CHAPTER ONE

Historical foundations of Early Childhood Care and Education in Uganda

PART ONE

Traditional Early Childhood Care and Education (The period before 1830)

Introduction

Traditional or indigenous education (also referred to as pre-colonial, informal, tribal, or community based education) was the type of education that existed prior to 1830. Written histories however, have tended to ignore indigenous education on grounds that Uganda (and Africa in general prior to colonial settlement) had no culture, history or civilization, and that Uganda's history (as well as that of the whole of Africa) has always been 'foreign' (Marah, 2006). Such assumptions have led many writers to focus on education provision in general and ECCE provision in particular, from the period after the coming of both Islam and Christianity. What such writers forget is that Uganda has a history of ECCE provision that is in fact much longer than her statehood. Thus the contributions of both Christianity and Islam to the development of ECCE in Uganda could be described as 'recent' as far as the history of ECCE is concerned.

Characteristics of Uganda's Traditional Early Childhood Care and Education

Traditional or indigenous education existed during the period before 1830 when societies in particular had little exposure to each other's way of life, and Uganda in general had not come into any contact with the outside world. The approach to education that existed therefore was based on tribal or clan units (Tiberondwa, 1998). Although there may have existed considerable variations in both the culture and the history of various communities and hence their approaches to ECCE provision, there were common characteristics that set indigenous education apart from any other form of education. These included:

- Home and school were seen as one
- There was no 'prescribed' curriculum;
- Education was culture specific;
- Education was child-centred/hands on;
- Assessment was authentic and continuous;

- Mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction;
- There was no teacher training;
- Education was for all;
- Education was cheap/economical;
- Education was gender-sensitive, as well as age appropriate.

The next section looks at the above characteristics in greater detail.

In traditional early childhood education in Uganda, school and life were one (Moumouni, 1968) as the homestead was the child's school (Castle, 1966). This meant that a child learned everywhere and all the time. Thus, learning was not determined in advance as to what had to take place, where, and at what time (Moumouni, 1968). As soon as the children woke up for example, they were expected to follow certain routines like greeting the elders as soon as they got out of bed, brushing their teeth and washing their faces. As the day progressed, the children were pointed in the right direction as to what they were expected to do. In the evening as they sat by the fire before, during, or after having dinner, tribal riddles and proverbs were told and re-told. The riddles were used to test childish elements and myths to explain the origins of the tribe and the genesis of man (Castle, 1966). Thus children were learning from the time they woke up until the time they went to bed. There was no distinction between instruction and education as they were both simultaneous. The process of traditional early childhood education was intimately integrated with the social, cultural, artistic, religious and recreational life of the ethnic group. That is 'schooling' and 'education' or learning of skills, social and cultural values and norms were not separate from the other spheres of life (Marah, 2006).

There was no prescribed curriculum. Although Uganda consisted of many ethnic groups and societies, each with its own culture and tradition, they all had common educational aims and objectives. In traditional Uganda, the content of education grew naturally out of the physical and social situation of the family, the clan or the tribe. That is to say, if the child's habitat was dominated by rivers, plains, mountains, or tropical forest, he or she was taught how to make the most out of it for his or her own advantage (Castle, 1966). The physical situation of a particular culture therefore, had a bearing on the subject matter and further influenced what practical skills the child had to learn in order to prepare him or her for future responsibilities. Boys and girls who lived in fishing areas for example, learned such skills as were required to

catch fish and mend fish straps, nets and canoes. In one way or the other, the educational practices of each society were meant to prepare the learner to live and work in society and profit from the existing environment (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2002).

Also, each family, tribe or clan, had their own set standards and/or expectations of what both boys and girls ought to learn. Such learning occurred naturally as girls helped their mothers in the home and as boys helped their fathers in the field. Girls for example learnt such things as how to welcome visitors and good hygiene in the home, while boys learnt names of animals, insects, plants and trees, and the dangers and uses of each, as they herded cattle with their fathers (Castle, 1966). What should be noted here is that however different the curriculum content and approach may have been, each family, tribe and clan had one common goal. This was to develop the whole child and mould him or her into a man or woman in the largest and fullest sense of the word (Moumouni, 1968). Although curriculum was not compartmentalized, it encompassed areas such as the child's physical, social emotional and personal, intellectual, and language development.

Physical development encompassed such games as jumping, racing, climbing, balancing, and swimming. As they grew older, children were encouraged to participate in recreational activities such as wrestling, dancing, drumming, acrobatics and racing (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). Through these games, the child not only developed his or her body, but also his or her endurance, agility, physical resistance, and the ability to use his or her body for different purposes and in different circumstances (Moumouni, 1968).

In promoting a child's social, emotional and personal development, traditional early childhood education aimed at moulding character and inculcating moral qualities in a child. Emphasis was put on such things as good manners, honesty, integrity, confidence, self-esteem, and sociability. Such qualities were important if the child was to live as a valuable member of a given community. This was due to the fact that the survival of traditional communities was in large measure dependent upon a network of reciprocal relationships that knit the family, clan and tribe together. This was why both parents and all other adults in the community ceaselessly gave their children instruction in social etiquette that upheld community ties (Moumouni, 1968). In addition, a child's social development was reinforced through such things as stories, legends and riddles, as well as community gatherings such as initiation ceremonies, harvest, and naming ceremonies. Stories and legends were mainly used

by elders to stress the importance of good character traits or glorious acts to the child, and consequences for vile behaviour (Moumouni, 1968). Community gatherings gave children the opportunity to be practically involved in meaningful relationships with members of their community. Such gatherings also helped children to become aware and at the same time understand the social values, customs, traditions (Moumouni, 1968) and laws that were important within their given family, community, tribe, or clan. Such gatherings also helped children to learn and appreciate that their existence and survival depended on communal unity.

In facilitating the development of a child's intellect, he or she was involved in the study of local history and the environment (local geography, plants and animals) (Fafunwa, 1974). Local history was mainly taught through riddles, proverbs, poetry and storytelling, while knowledge about the environment was taught as children practically engaged in day-to-day chores with their parents. Riddles and proverbs were one way of abstracting a child's thoughts, which in turn helped him or her to develop reasoning and judgment (Moumouni, 1968).

The development of language and communication skills was also accorded an important place. Children were encouraged to express and use language in community discussions, narration of events (Moumouni, 1968) and story recitations. They explained, described, predicted, and asked questions, all of which helped them to gain mastery of language. Their listening skills were also reinforced as they attentively listened to the adults during story telling. Children were also encouraged to pay attention to any information and instructions from their elders.

Another characteristic of traditional early childhood education was that it was culture specific. Such education provision focused exclusively on a child's clan or tribe (Scalon, 1964), and hardly educated children on anything outside their traditions. To be precise, this type of education was very embryonic and localized, and barely operated outside the village framework (Moumouni, 1968). This type of education aimed at preparing children for their responsibilities as adults in their home, village and tribe. In practical terms, this meant that the skills and knowledge possessed by a given ethnic group could not be easily transmitted to another tribe. Each tribe therefore, aimed at grooming perfect and culturally embedded men and women of the future, who would be able to perpetuate cultural traditions. The main objective of traditional early childhood education therefore, was that of cultural transmission.

It was the responsibility of adults to carefully guide and initiate young children into the culture of the society.

In addition, hands-on education was the norm of traditional early childhood education in Uganda. It involved the child being concretely and meaningfully involved in what they were learning. As mothers taught their daughters the roles of motherhood, wife and other gender-appropriate skills such as household chores, tending the fire and hygiene, they practically participated in such chores. Boys learnt by accompanying their fathers and getting involved in such things as watching over animals and hunting. When it came to learning about their culture, children were not treated as spectators, but rather, they took part in the ceremonies and rituals. Thus children learnt mainly through imitation, recitation, and demonstration (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2002).

Assessment in traditional early childhood education was continuous and performance-based. Thus, children were assessed on a daily basis within the context of learning and activity engagement. Assessment was done in various ways depending on the type of activity and location. For example if a boy was being taught by his father how to hunt, he was taken into the forest, taught the necessary techniques and then made to put such techniques into practice, under the watchful eye of his father. Also in order to assess how her daughter was learning house chores, a mother would wake up one day and pretend to be ill. This meant that the girl child was left in charge of all the housework. Both boys and girls were assessed as to how well they performed the designated tasks and corrected accordingly (Ssekamwa, 1997).

Furthermore, traditional early childhood education was conducted in indigenous languages (Owu-Ewie, 2006). Because the main aim was to educate the child in his or her family and clan tradition (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2002), there was no better language other than the child's own. In fact intermarriage between different cultures was unacceptable, a thing which helped to ensure that traditions and language were not 'diluted'. The use of the mother tongue helped to hold families, communities and tribes together, by transmitting both the native language and cultural traditions to later generations. Language therefore, became one way of defining and differentiating one tribe from another. This helped to maintain their unique identity in society.

In traditional early childhood education, no 'specialised' teacher training was required. The role of 'teacher' was expected of every member in the child's immediate environment (Fafunwa, 1974). Thus, teaching a child was not only seen as a role that was to be played by the child's mother, rather it was seen as the responsibility of the child's father, aunties, uncles, grandparents, cousins, friends, neighbours, as well as the entire community. In traditional early childhood education, it took the whole village-community to educate and raise a child. The entire community considered itself, and was considered by others, responsible for the education of their young ones (Moumouni, 1968). Thus children's training was a cooperative effort.

Also, the current slogan of 'no child left behind' or 'Education For All' was, in fact, the basis of traditional early childhood education in Uganda. All children regardless of their social-economic standing or gender, had access to education. In this sense, education was used as a process of breaking down barriers and of combating social exclusion (Nafukho, 2006). Although the methods of teaching differed from place to place chiefly because of social, economic and geographical imperatives, the common principle of education was that of preparing children to function as valuable and useful members of their community, and to play a useful role in it. Thus, education was one way of equipping children with the skills seen as appropriate to their gender in preparation for their distinctive roles in society.

Traditional early childhood education was also economical/ cheap in nature (Castle, 1966) in that it did not involve paying teachers, paying school fees, purchasing learning materials, and constructing buildings. As noted earlier, the child's home was the school, while the parents, the entire extended family and the community at large, acted as teachers. Also learning materials were items/materials that families used in their day-to-day living. It was therefore the responsibility of each family to ensure that their children were educated.

Furthermore, traditional early childhood education in Uganda was clearly cut along the lines of gender. In the case of a boy child, the father was responsible for his education. While in the case of a girl child, it was the mother that assumed the main responsibility. Each child was taught skills appropriate to their sex, and teaching a girl boy's skills was considered abominable. Mothers taught their daughters everything related to the role of being a mother (Moumouni, 1968) or wife. Such teaching and learning involved skills as cooking, looking

after a home, and appropriate washing of dishes and clothes. Fathers on the other hand trained their sons to develop skills in becoming good husbands and fathers. They were taught such skills as how to protect their family in times of danger and how to provide for them (fishing, farming, rearing animals, hunting, and black smith).

Traditional early childhood education in Uganda was also age-appropriate in nature. Before the age of three years, learning of both babies and toddlers was confined to their homestead with the mother playing the major role in their upbringing. After the age of three, children were exposed beyond their homestead. Boys started to be trained how to become future farmers. They were given small hoes and cutlasses and were made to work between their father and their elder brother (Fafunwa, 1982). Girls were given unsharpened knives and told to peel plantains (Castle, 1966), cassava, yam, or sweet potatoes. Some may interpret this, as merely engaging children in ‘domestic work’, but such exposure was one way of familiarising children with aspects of their future lives. Later, a little at a time, the range of activities that children were exposed to widened, and they were taken beyond their usual familiar day-to-day tasks, and beyond their immediate family environment. Boys later started to work on plots of land, and to watch over the field, and girls began to cook and also to sell homemade products (Moumouni, 1968) in markets. They also took part in age grouping activities, which required them to move and work together (Fafunwa, 1982) with children of the same age group, but not necessarily their relatives. Thus, the education that was given to Ugandan children fitted their age-group and their expected social roles in society (Marah, 2006).

Summary

Traditional Ugandan early childhood education adopted a ‘holistic’ approach to child development. Thus, it ‘brought up’, ‘it guided’, ‘it directed’, ‘it drew out’, it led out’, ‘it raised up’, and ‘it reared’ a child (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2002). Although the system of training and educating children differed from society to society, the purpose was clear- *functionalism, preparationism, perennialism, communalism and holism* (Castle, 1966; Fafunwa, 1974). By functionalism, children learned through imitation, work, play, oral literature and initiation ceremonies. Thus, learners were a productive part of the community. Preparationism aimed at equipping children with the skills in preparation for their distinctive roles in society. With perennialism, education was for maintaining and preserving the cultural heritage. Communalism meant that a child was taught that he or she could not live alone, and that the community demanded conformity to its obedience of laws, manners and respect of

elders. And holism or multiple learning aimed at equipping children with the ability to undertake a multitude of occupations that required related skills.

The common goal of Ugandan traditional early childhood education was therefore to make children into valuable members of their immediate and extended families, as well as the entire community. This is clearly illustrated in Mbiti's words 'I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' (1990). Such an illustration unmistakably shows that a child was considered as existing only in relationship with other people; his family as well as the entire community. Traditional pre-school education helped children to develop attitudes, abilities, and all other forms of behavior that were of positive value to the society in which they lived (Fafunwa, 1974).

With all its 'shortcomings' therefore, it should be acknowledged that Ugandan traditional early childhood education was a real education that seems to have achieved its 'limited objectives'. It might have been intrinsically conservative in nature, but it was an effective way of preparing children for their future (Fafunwa, 1974). But however 'useful' traditional early childhood education was to the indigenous Ugandans, it was not an 'education of change' (Ociti, 1973; P.107) according to the missionaries and later the colonialists. Thus, other than an education that taught strict obedience to the elders' rules and authority, Uganda needed an education that would help them to attain 'political', 'economic', 'social' and 'cultural' development (Marah, 2006), hence the introduction of formal Early Childhood Care and Education.

PART TWO

The Introduction of Formal Early Childhood Care and Education (1830-1962)

Introduction

Formal early childhood education was the type of education that replaced Uganda's traditional approach to educating children. This was as a result of Uganda coming into contact with the outside world. This contact from around 1830 therefore, meant that early

childhood education was no longer defined along the lines of tribe or clan. That is, it ceased to be 'culture specific'.

Its Origin and Characteristics

The introduction of formal early childhood education in Uganda can be traced back to the 1830s when Arab traders reached the interior of Uganda under the leadership of Ahmed bin Ibrahim. This was after moving inland from their enclaves along the Indian ocean of East Africa. And for over thirty years, Islam became the only foreign religion known to the Uganda people. However, the Arabs did not succeed in winning many converts to their faith and as a result, only a few qur'anic schools were established (Tusingire, 1998). There have been suggestions put forward to highlight the reasons as to why Islam did not have much influence. Firstly, the Arabs were ill prepared to spread their religion. In fact what brought them to Uganda was mainly trade not missionary purposes. Secondly, their traditions concerning circumcision, marriage, and burial rights, did not find acceptance among indigenous Ugandans (Tusingire, 1998).

The Arab traders were subsequently followed in the 1860s by British explorers searching for the source of the Nile. These too had little impact on the social well-being of the people of Uganda. It was not until the late 1870s that Christian missionaries followed the British explorers. The first missionaries to arrive in Uganda in 1877 were two protestant missionaries, Smith and Wilson of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Their coming was as a result of a request made by Kabaka Mutesa of Buganda to Henry Morton Stanley (a Welsh man), noted as the first European explorer to reach Uganda. Mutesa's request was sparked by his fear of the increased interest the Egyptians were showing in his Kingdom, coupled with their continuing contact with his rival Kingdom of Bunyoro (Kaberuka, 1990). Two years later in 1879, Smith and Wilson were followed by three groups of Catholic missionaries comprising the White Fathers (missionaries of Africa), the Mill Hill, and the Comboni missionaries (Verona Fathers) under the leadership of father Lourdel (Tusingire, 1998; Phillips, 2002).

With their aim of spreading Christianity and winning converts, both the protestant and catholic missionaries 'scrambled' to win as many 'souls' as possible to Christianity, by establishing as many missionary schools as they could. Soon the newfound 'white man's

religion' had gained popularity among the indigenous masses. Even when kabaka Mwanga had tried to stop the converts from attending missionary schools and even had some burnt to death, many Bagandas (both young and old) sought to be baptized in great numbers.

Although a few qur'anic schools had been established by the Arab traders in the 1830s, the late 1870s marked the turning point in Uganda's approach to educating children. This was due to an increase in the number of missionary schools. Thus, when later Uganda became a British colony in 1894, the make-up of the education system did not markedly differ from that started earlier by the missionaries. In essence, pre-school education in particular and education in general had ceased to be a preparation for survival but of 'civilising' a backward people. Such provision was characterized by:

- Separation of home and school;
- Education became curriculum based;
- Culture insensitive curriculum;
- Narrow/limited curriculum;
- Teacher centred learning;
- Formal assessment of children;
- The use of English as the medium of instruction;
- Formal teacher training;
- Unequal opportunities to education;
- Uneven distribution of schools;
- Meagre government investment in education;
- Private owned provision;
- Lack of coordination among providers;
- Varying quality in provision;
- Gender inequality;
- Racial segregation;
- And the focus on primary education and other levels.

The second half of this section looks at this transition in greater detail.

Firstly, the introduction of formal early childhood education in Uganda, led to the introduction of the word 'school', which meant a separate building from a child's homestead. This meant that the child was no longer taught within the vicinity of his or her home, but

school could be anywhere within or outside the child's village. This saw the coming together of children from different ethnic backgrounds and languages, which meant that education was no longer for the 'initiation' of children into their 'specific' culture and society. Children started to have 'outside' contact with other children, and hence experienced the different cultures that existed. They learned different languages, customs, riddles, stories and poems from other children and adults. They also learned the different ways of life of various communities. In this way, education was not for the promotion of a strong bond of kinship, but it was for 'social integration' into the wider world. Because children were not 'cocooned' into a group of people with the same cultural beliefs and languages, they came to develop positive attitudes towards other children whose language, culture and religion was different from theirs.

Secondly, children were moved from an education system in which curriculum was naturally defined in relation to their gender, physical, social and cultural surroundings, to an education system that emphasized Christianity, arithmetic, reading and writing, regardless of their sex and backgrounds. To the Christian missionaries, such a curriculum was the only way forward to bringing 'education' to a people that had no culture, history or civilization (Murray, 1967). Even when the colonial government became involved in education provision, the approach did not remarkably differ from that of the missionaries. What seemed to have changed was a slight shift from a purely religious education to a diluted semi-secular education, whose aim was the furtherance of colonial interests in Uganda (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982).

Thirdly, unlike traditional Uganda early childhood education that aimed at perpetuating a culture of society by preparing children for their responsibilities as adults in their home, village and tribe (Scalon, 1964; Tiberondwa, 1998), the curriculum in formal pre-schooling educated children away from their culture and society. Thus the education that children received did not prepare them for the kind of life and work that was relevant to the Ugandan cultural way of life. Instead, they were 'educated out' of such things as agricultural (Kaberuka, 1990) and communal ways of life. Attention was put first and foremost on Christianity that encompassed such things as reciting religious literature, rituals and the rosary. In addition to religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, handicrafts and hygiene formed part of the curriculum. What should be noted is that both reading and writing were incorporated into the curriculum to help converts to read the catechism, religious prayer books and other religious materials available at the time (Tusingire, 1998).

Formal early childhood education had little relation to the ordinary life of a Ugandan child, but provided mental contacts with the world beyond Uganda not necessary for the future development of the Ugandan people (Thomas and Scott, 1935). This was seen as an obvious and conscious attempt by both foreign missionaries and the colonial government to educate Ugandan (as well as African) children away from their culture (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). It was an education that aimed at producing ‘elites’, a people that would uphold colonial ways of life (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). Thus at each stage, Ugandan children were introduced to the values of the European man, which in one way or another affected their identification with the masses (Kaberuka, 1990). This formal education in varying degrees penetrated and disturbed this closely knit fabric of Ugandan life and the young Ugandan was born into a far more complex cultural heritage (Ozigi and Ocho, 1981).

Also, unlike the indigenous curriculum that catered for a child’s overall development, the curriculum in formal early childhood education was very limited in nature. That is to say, as Tiberondwa (1998) and Ssekamwa (1997) argue, both Catholic and Christian missionaries did not come to Uganda with the aim of moulding Ugandan children into well-developed and balanced children, but rather for their own gains; they were hoping to convert as many ‘pagans’ as possible. As noted earlier, Christianity was the dominant aspect in this curriculum, with the main aim of producing the type of citizens that the missionaries desired (Hansen and Twaddle, 1994); citizens that were Christian. It is not surprising therefore, that many authors draw attention to the view that a limited curriculum adversely affected the overall development of children.

The narrowness of the curriculum remained relatively unchanged even after the colonial government increased its involvement in education (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). As seen in 1925 with the publication of the first Annual Report on Education, Christian education was still the focus. But this time the curriculum was not used solely for winning converts to the Christian faith, rather it was used in the continued furtherance of colonial interests (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982) in Uganda.

Pre-school education became ‘teacher centred’. Christian missionaries came to Uganda with one thing in mind; spreading Christianity to the natives, hence the common saying ‘give me a child today and I will show you a civilized Christian tomorrow’. With this in mind, education

was made largely 'teacher centred'. Children were told what to do and were also made to memorize and recite religious scriptures and rituals (Langohr, 2005). In this journey of religious conversion, children were made to go through a prolonged and rigorous type of training especially by the Catholic missionaries. To the Catholics, this was the only way of ensuring that children were firmly grounded into the faith lest they forget their baptismal promises (Bouniol, 1929). To Lavigerie (1950) in particular, Ugandans (as well as all Africans) only held rudimentary and imperfect ideas about God, soul, immortality and morality. In reference to their morality for example, he said:

...as for morality, since the foundation is absolutely lacking, it can be said that it does not exist. All the vices are found among them, and the scanty notions which they possess concerning right and wrong are nothing more than the dying rays of that light which God gave humanity at its origin (Lavingerie, 1950, p. 107)

The prolonged and rigorous training was therefore the only way that apostasy could be avoided (Bouniol, 1929). As a result, catechumenate was to last for at least four years, within which all converts had to be taught and passed through three distinctive stages: 'postulants' in which teachings involved general truths like God's existence, creation, natural ethics and the importance of conscience, 'catechumens' also known as the intermediate stage which encompassed teachings about Christian truth inducing the life of Christ, the 'incarnation' - the trinity and the church, and the 'faithful' which was the stage when the converts were admitted into baptism (Tusingire, 1998). The would-be Christians passed through all the three stages under strict direction from their teachers.

Furthermore, instead of the informal authentic assessment that had dominated traditional early childhood education provision, assessment was formalised. During this long and strict journey to Christian conversion, each participant (whether child or adult) had to be formally assessed and hence a decision was taken whether to promote him or her to the next stage. This type of teaching therefore did not encourage the would-be-converts to discover and create their own knowledge, but rather, they had to reproduce what they had been taught by the catechist teachers. Failure to do so meant failure to be promoted to the next stage.

English became the medium of instruction (Tomas'evski, 1999). As noted previously, formal early childhood education schooling meant that the immediate family members no longer

educated their children. This meant that children had to be taught in 'school', a place that brought children of different languages together. And because one class contained children from different ethnic groups, there was no way teachers were going to be able to learn the different languages that children brought with them to school. The use of English became the only way teachers could communicate to all the children regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. In addition, English was used due to the fact that indigenous languages were seen as 'inadequate' and could not be used as a teaching medium (Bamgbose, 2000) by the Europeans. Children were therefore forced to assume two identities through the home and school language. Thus, as soon as the child reached the school gates, he or she took on English as the language of the school, hence denouncing allegiance to his or her culture, and announcing allegiance to the school. And as soon as the child came out of the school gate, he or she announced allegiance to his culture and denounced allegiance to the school. And because language defined his or her cultural identity, a child may have been confused as to what was the 'right' community to belong to. This may also have put strain on the child's relationship with members of his or her community as he or she preferred to use the new-found 'trendy' language even though his/her parents, relatives and the entire community did not know what the child was talking about.

Because early childhood education moved from being largely informal to being formal, teacher training became necessary. And as a result, missionaries trained catechists who were used as teachers in their established catechical schools (Kaberuka, 1990; Tusingire, 1998). Also in the 1950s infant teachers were sent abroad to specialise in infant care methods. On their return, they held workshops for infant teachers, updating them on the 'modern' methods of teaching (Muheirwe *et.al.*, 2002). This moved teaching from being a role that was expected of every member in a child's family and community (Fafunwa, 1974) to teaching that was designated to only a few 'trained' personnel. This meant that it was no longer for the entire village to educate their children everywhere and at any time, but rather parents had to send their children to learn (often outside their villages) in an environment with predetermined teachers, place and time (Moumouni, 1968).

Unlike the indigenous early childhood education that aimed at promoting social inclusion and hence catered for all children regardless of their socio-economic as well as their geographical standing, missionary and later colonial pre-school education educated only a few children. Because the philosophical and ideological assumptions were taken from European class

societies and not from communal and relatively un-stratified Ugandan societies, missionary and colonial education selected and educated what they considered as the 'cream of the crop'; children who were considered superior to other children. Thus, they concentrated on teaching sons of chiefs (Hansen and Twaddle, 1995) who would later play a major role in propagating colonial ideas (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). Also, catechist as well as secular pre-schools were unevenly distributed within the country and between regions. Most pre-schools were located in the central districts of Buganda, while virtually none were in the Northern Province (Kaberuka, 1990; Tomas`evski, 1999). There are two reasons for this: first and foremost, Buganda benefited most, due to the fact that it was the region that experienced the first contact with the European missionaries. Even when the colonization of Uganda began, Buganda played a significant role in this process, and hence was rewarded for its collaboration with the colonialists. Secondly, the Baganda (as well as other Bantu population), were seen by the Europeans as more suitable to educate and employ in administrative services (Hansen and Twaddle, 1994). While the northerners (the Lugbara, Logo, Moru, Azande, Alur, Makaraka and Kakwa) on the other hand were, according to the British, most suitable for army services due to their 'inherited warlike traditions' (Hansen, 1997, p.76).

There was also meagre government investment in ECCE in particular and education in general. Missionary 'education' as well as that offered by other voluntary organizations was wholly funded by their respective countries, with little help from the colonial government. When government funding was later secured, only less than 1 percent of government revenue was spent on education (Kaberuka, 1990; Langohr, 2005). This government assistance was only introduced after both missionaries and other voluntary bodies demanded some government financial assistance. The financial assistance system known as grants-in-aid, though meager, was meant to supplement the efforts of the missionaries and other voluntary agencies (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982).

Because the Christian missionaries, Muslims and voluntary agencies/organizations (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982) pioneered the formal pre-school education sector, it remained in their hands for many years. This was mainly due to the fact that the colonial government was reluctant and even against the idea of educating the natives, this being seen as something that could work against their colonial policies (Tusingire, 1998). It was therefore up to the different providers to set policies that would ensure the smooth running of their programs. Lack of

government involvement also meant lack of coordination among the different providers. All the 'service providers' concentrated provision in their respective geographical areas without much regard for development outside them (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). And because the colonial government in its early years was less interested in getting involved in the education affairs at the time, there was lack of coordination in the services offered. Although coordination means the alignment of distinct activities (Malone and Crowston, 1994), this could not easily be achieved given the fact that each group of providers had a fixed and different agenda from the other. That is to say, protestant missionaries wanted to win as many children as possible to their side, a motive that was shared by the Catholic missionaries and by Moslems. Because of this, their mission could only be successfully accomplished if they carried out their activities within the confines of their respective religions. Re-ordering and re-arranging their separate activities so as to be dependent on each other would have meant 'compromising' their mission and goals, a thing that either group was not ready to do. The different providers came to the field of 'education' with different objectives, reasons and experiences. And because there was no government control of the sector at the time as well as nationally binding standards, provision varied in quality (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). It was therefore the responsibility of the different providers to set standards or a 'yardstick' against which 'good' provision could be judged.

Formal early childhood education provision was also characterised by low-level attendance by girls. This low level could be explained by missionary and colonial education policies, as well as by the cultural attitudes of the local populations towards girls' education. According to the missionary and colonial education policies, girls' education was not seen as a priority. Emphasis was therefore put on educating sons mainly of chiefs who would play a vital role in furthering their colonial interests. On the cultural side, girls in all traditional societies were tied to domestic duties. For example girls fulfilled a vital role in food production and minding of their siblings in many Ugandan tribal societies, and their involvement in schooling was viewed as taking away a vital source of labour. In addition, the early age of marriage may have constituted another obstacle. Parents preferred to prepare their girls for their future homes, a thing that could bring great shame to the family if it were not properly done. Lastly, there was lack of any economic motivation (Broomfield, 1927). When girls left school, there were no jobs available for them in the modern economic sector.

Lastly during the colonial time, pre-school education was provided along racial lines, as each group opened up centres that were exclusively catering for their children. That is Asian children went to Asian schools; European children went to European schools; and Arab children went to qur'anic schools (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). As native children were not initially admitted to such centres, this meant that for a long time they were pushed outside of the so called 'formal' education system. Even when it came to funding, more government funds were put into education of migrant children than native Ugandans (Ramchandani, 1976). The government seemed to have been more concerned about Asian than Ugandan children when in fact over 90 percent of the government revenue was coming from the Ugandan sector (Kaberuka, 1990). Such actions sent a clear message from the then governor, and indeed from the entire colonial society, that Asians and Europeans constituted an important 'local population', while native Ugandans were neglected in their own country (Kaberuka, 1990). Inevitably, the neglect of Ugandan children in particular and Ugandans in general sowed a seed of discontentment leading to uprisings and the formation of political parties demanding for independence (Mutibwa, 1992), which was later attained in October 1962.

Summary

The introduction of formal early childhood education was a clear indication that traditional early childhood education was considered as 'primitive', 'savage', and 'barbaric' (Fafunwa, 1974) by both the missionaries and the colonial government. To them, their coming marked a phase that brought education to a people that were entirely 'uneducated' (Castle, 1966). This was because Uganda's indigenous education was markedly different from the British, and it did not conform to the westernized system (Fafunwa, 1974). What the British forgot was that every society had its own way of judging what 'education' and the 'educated' meant. For example, the Greek idea of an educated man was one who was mentally and physically well balanced; the Romans placed emphasis on oratorical and military training; England during the middle ages considered the knight, the lord and the priest as classical examples of a well-educated elite; in France, the scholar was the hallmark of excellence; in Germany, it was the patriot; in Uganda, the hunter, the noble man, the man of character or anyone who combined the latter features with specific skills was judged to be a well-educated and well-integrated citizen of his community (Fafunwa, 1974).

By branding Uganda's traditional early childhood education as 'primitive' the colonialists introduced an education that 'de-ruralised' and 'de-Ugandanised' the Ugandan child both physically and mentally. This type of education meant that children had to be isolated from their local communities, taught western religion and ways of life, and taught a different language. All of the above separated children from the life and needs of their communities (Busia, 1964), while promoting the spirit of individualism or self, as well as competition and a desire for domination (Woolman, 2001) rather than interdependence of individuals within communities.

Colonial education was therefore one way of stripping Uganda of her indigenous learning structures and drawing her towards the structure of the colonizers. It heavily 'wounded' the indigenous history and customs that were once practiced, valued and observed (Alexander, 1999). By corrupting their 'soul and mind', Ugandans (both young and old), lost self-respect' and 'love for their race', (Woolman, 2001) culture, names, language, environment, unity, heritage, capacities, and ultimately in themselves. Missionary and colonial education therefore made Ugandans view their past as one wasteland of non-achievement; they wanted to distance themselves from that wasteland (Ngugi, 1981).

The next section discusses how colonial approaches to early childhood education continued to influence the 'make-up' of the ECCE sub-sector even after Uganda attained independence.

PART THREE

Early Childhood Care and Education in Post Independence Uganda (1962-1990)

Introduction

Uganda gained independence on the 9th of October 1962, with Sir Edward Fredrick William David Walugembe Mutesa Luwangula, the then Kabaka of the Buganda Kingdom as the president and commander in chief of the armed forces. Apollo Milton Opeto Obote, the then Uganda People's Congress (UPC) party leader, a Lango, became the Prime Minister. Independence brought great joy and optimism to the people of Uganda, who hoped that after decades of foreign rule, the time had come for them to speak with one voice. They also saw this as a great opportunity for one of their 'own' to use the available political and economic resources to provide them with the 'long denied' basic social and economic services. Education was one of the services high on the agenda of the newly independent state. This is

because colonial education policies were now viewed as Euro-centric, divisive, and exploitative. Seeing education as a steppingstone to national development and hence economic independence, the new education policies were to be aimed at secularizing and indigenizing (Ugandanizing) the education system.

Characteristics of Early Childhood Care and Education after Independence and before the Jomtien Conference

Although at independence and thereafter, many had hoped for tangible changes in the education system as a whole and ECCE in particular, this was unfortunately not translated into reality. Thus even though a few changes were made, ECCE remained a colonial legacy both in principle and practice. This was due to the inability of consecutive governments to put their 'desired' education strategies into practice. ECCE provision therefore continued to be characterised by the following:

- Curriculum-based provision;
- Uneven distribution;
- Less focus on ECCE and more on primary education and other levels;
- Pre-school education accessible for only a few;
- The separation of home and school;
- Teacher centred learning;
- Teacher training;
- Non- culture specific education;
- Formal assessment of children's learning;
- Little or no government involvement;
- Wide spread gender inequality; and
- The use of English as the medium of instruction.

The next section will look at these characteristics in detail.

Although colonial education was viewed as divisive and exploitative in post-colonial Uganda and hence the need to make education more relevant to the social and economic well-being of the country, little was done to put this into reality in the first post independence decades (Tomas'evski, 1999). As a result, pre-school education remained an imitation of the colonial education system (Woolman, 2001) and it continued along the western model as both philosophy and the content of the curriculum remained virtually untouched (Sifuna, 2001).

Thus, colonial themes, literature, illustrations, values, and methodologies that were ill adapted to the intellectual and personal needs (Kwaku Asante-Darko, 2002) of children and Uganda as a whole, continued to be used. Although education was viewed as inextricably interwoven with the quest for national development and modernization, the continued use of the colonial 'curriculum' was doing more harm than good. In fact such a curriculum was serving to create and reinforce self-devaluation, self-hatred, and a sense of inferiority in Ugandan children. This is because it is in the early years when children form attitudes, find points of reference, build concepts, and form images for cognitive development (Glazier, 1989). All of these play a major role in their social, personal, emotional, intellectual, and creative development. Continuing along colonial lines meant that rather than liberating, de-colonizing and acting as an agent of change, the curriculum was in fact helping to 'reproduce' and 'maintain' the colonial legacy.

In addition, numbers of pre-schools remained unevenly distributed between regions, with urban centres having the highest number compared to rural areas, while some areas had virtually none. This pattern may have been so due to three main factors. First and foremost, as it has been noted earlier, both missionaries and the colonial masters seemed to have favoured some groups more than others. Buganda for example had the highest number of schools because the Baganda and other Bantu tribes were seen as suitable to educate and employ in administrative services. The northern region that comprised tribes like the Lugbara, Logo, Moru, Azande, Alur, Makaraka and Kakwa was viewed as only suitable for army service. (Hansen, 1997). Secondly, parents in rural areas had not grasped the importance of their children attending some form of pre-school education. To them, sending children to pre-schools was a waste of money and valuable labour source. And lastly, with independence came an influx of rural dwellers to urban centres in the quest of a 'civilised' life, looking for jobs other than farming. On the other hand, not many urban dwellers were willing to sacrifice the 'easy life' in urban centres to go and start pre-schools in a life without electricity and running water.

Furthermore, like other newly independent African states, education in Uganda was aimed at using schools to develop manpower for economic development and Ugandanization of the civil service (Woolman, 2001). To the Ugandan government, the pace of localization could only be synchronized with the growing supply of educated indigenous manpower (Rado, 1972). With this in mind, focus was put on primary education and other levels in the

education system, in terms of funding, control and expansion. Pre-school education was therefore not at all on Uganda's education agenda. To the Ugandan government, pre-school education was not seen as 'value for money', and therefore not essential in her quest for rapid economic advancement.

Pre-school education continued to be only for a few. Although at independence it was hoped that segregation in pre-school education provision along the lines of social and economic status would end at last, this was not so. The 1970 Education Act that gave the Ugandan government full control of the education system (Tomas'evski, 1999) did not, in fact, include pre-school provision. Services at this level of education continued, just as in colonial times, to be in the hands of private providers (religious schools, churches, parental and community initiatives) with little or no government interference. And because money to run such services had to be raised privately, providers had to charge parents fees. This meant that it was only children whose parents could afford such fees, who had the opportunity to access such services. Thus, pre-education continued to be only available to a few children and remained as a form of 'credentialing' into the 'elite' status (Sifuna, 1972).

In post-colonial Uganda, school and home continued to be separate. That is, pre-school education continued to be offered in separate buildings and sometimes children had to walk for miles and from one village to another, to the nearest pre-school centre.

Unlike traditional early childhood education that was dominated by demonstration, imitation, observation, and practical-active participation (Woolman, 2001), pre-school education in post independent Uganda continued to be dominated by pupil passivity, limited verbal instruction, and rote learning (Woolman, 2001). And because the young generation of Ugandan children formed the future generation of the much desired 'human capital' seen as vital in the fight against economic dependence on former colonial masters, the teacher-centred approach to teaching did not help Uganda to work towards producing that much needed 'productive' human capital. In fact what it did was to inhibit the development of children's practical, critical thinking, and creative skills, all of which are vital to any country's economic development. This is because unlike the child-centred approach to teaching that encourages children to produce knowledge (to discover new information or unique solutions to a problem), the teacher-centred approach encourages children to reproduce information, that is, to recall already known knowledge (Morgan *et al.*, 2005). Noticeable effects of the

contribution of a child centred approach to education on the economy may only become apparent in years to come, but it is the foundation upon which lifelong learning, and hence a country's productivity depends.

With independence came the desire to 'Ugandanize' education and to minimize the use of foreign manpower in the sector. This move however, was ill executed in the sense that there would be employees and those already working in the sector were not trained as there were no guidelines or institutions to train them. The result was that any person that expressed the desire to work in the sector was taken on in order to deal with the increasing demand for pre-school education. This could explain why teachers employed the use of a teacher-centred approach to teaching; most of them had no knowledge of child development (Woolman, 2001) or of working in pre-school settings.

In addition, the achievement of independence did not mean the going back to pre-colonial type of early childhood education provision. In fact the cultural and traditional barriers that had existed prior to the coming of the Europeans; barriers that had defined the type of education each child received within each specific tribe or clan, had been permanently brought down. Thus rather than individual societies being responsible for the preservation of their particular knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural heritage, children continued to mix with other children as well as being taught by adults from different cultural backgrounds. Emphasis continued not to be put on culture or tribally relevant curriculum content like hunting, farming and fishing, instead it was geared towards a 'civilized' type of education that taught Arithmetic, Reading and Writing (Tusingire, 1998).

Just as in mission pre-schools in colonial times, formal assessment techniques (tests) continued to be used in post-colonial pre-schools as a means of measuring children's progress (Woolman, 2001). This atmosphere was further fuelled by a climate of competition created in the Ugandan people prior to and following independence. Rather than the continuous and performance-based assessment that had dominated pre-colonial early childhood education, children were forced to memorize what they had been taught by their teachers, and re-produce that knowledge during testing. In essence, this type of testing was encouraging abstract rather than concrete thinking from children. Also, other than aiming at enhancing children's learning and development, formal testing was mainly used for promotion from one level to another.

Another dominant characteristic of pre-school provision in post independent Uganda was limited government involvement. Following independence, the efforts of the government's were directed towards developing other levels of education rather than the pre-school sector. Unlike primary, secondary, and further education that had been taken over by the government in the early 1970s (Tomas'evski, 1999), pre-school education provision continued to be a private affair left in the hands of churches, volunteers, as well as private individuals. As government's education funding towards education expansion and diversification increased (Woolman, 2001) in all other levels of education, funding in the pre-school education sector was left in the hands of those responsible for its establishment. As a result, provision in the ECCE sub-sector was of varying quality.

In post-colonial Uganda, there continued to be low participation of girls in pre-school education programs. This pattern had been started by the missionaries and later the colonial government, who had both emphasised on training sons of chiefs (Hansen and Twaddle, 1995). Because of this, the cultural attitudes of the local population towards the role of girls and women in society were left untouched. The role of girls therefore, continued to be firmly tied to domestic duties like child minding, cooking, and working in the field. This meant that the education of girls remained the responsibility of parents and relatives, with the sole aim of preparing them for their future husbands and homes. Even when the indigenous people assumed control of the sector, there was not much change. To parents, sending a girl child to pre-school was a waste of money because girls continued to be married off at a very early age. Also, as men dominated the modern economic sector, parents were not motivated to send their girls to school since there would be no jobs available for them (Whitehead, 1981).

English continued to be used as the medium of instruction in pre-school settings. Although independence was seen as one step closer to freedom, unity and progress, what was inherited from the colonial masters was a country with diverse population groups with distinct languages and cultures, and haphazard boundaries (Alexander, 1999). Because of the multilingual character of Uganda, those in power were faced with a dilemma as to which language would be used as a unifying factor in their quest to 'de-colonise' Uganda. After independence, on addressing the central question of national unity with regard to language, President Obote hesitantly but clearly put forward his position concerning the issue at stake:

The problem of culture...is essentially a problem of how best we can maintain and develop the various cultural forms in Uganda through a common language. I have no answer to this. I am well aware that English cannot be the media (*sic*) to express Dingding songs, I have my doubts whether Lwo (also written as Luo) language can express in all fineness Lusoga songs, yet I consider that Uganda's policy to teach more and more English should be matched with the teaching of some African languages. We are trying to think about a possible answer to the question of why we need an African language as a national language. Do we need it merely for political purposes, for addressing public meetings, for talking in councils? Do we need it as a language for workers; to enable them to talk and argue their terms with their employers? Do we need an African language for intellectual progress? Do we need such language to cover every aspect of our lives intellectually, politically, economically? I would not attempt to answer that question but it appears to me that Uganda at least is faced with a difficult future on this matter and the future might confirm that a decision is necessary to push for some languages deliberately and discourage the use of some other languages also deliberately (Alexander, 1989, pp. 40-41).

Obote may have seen it as vital in continuing to use some languages against others, but the use of English during the colonial times had given it high status as it was associated with 'civilization' and 'enlightenment', (Nyamnjoh, 2004). As a result, all the indigenous Ugandan languages were made inferior in the eyes of parents, educators, as well as politicians. English therefore became the language of 'power' (Alexander, 1989, p.40-41) and 'change', a language that would do more 'good' than 'harm' to Uganda's quest to enter into 'modernity' both *economically* and *politically*.

Economically, the use of all the indigenous languages was seen as costly in terms of teacher training, developing grammar and orthographies, producing and translating books and supplementary materials. The cost issue overrode the most important issue of the educational needs of children that could be met through the use of indigenous languages. Furthermore, it escaped discussion that ability in these languages already existed without cost (Alexander, 1999). In addition, retention of English as an official language was seen as one way of preventing the newly independent state from being isolated from the rest of the world, as well

as a means of keeping abreast of technological and scientific achievements in international fora (Alexander, 1999).

Politically, cultural and traditional barriers that had existed prior to the coming of the Europeans had been ended. This meant that although the colonial masters had drawn out boundaries, in reality Uganda became boundary-less; different tribes mingled together, each with their own desires and aspiration for their 'homelands'. Choosing one language against all the other remaining languages would have had far-reaching consequences on the very unity of Uganda that the new government wanted to work towards. The only option therefore was to adopt English as a national language; a language that at the very least was accepted by everyone, and therefore seen as the only neutral language that would help to cultivate 'national unity' and 'national liberation' (Alexander, 1999). In addition to that, retaining English as the national language would also help to maintain the 'elitism' of the few. The 'elite' was a class that had been created by the Europeans. English was therefore an 'asset'; a sign of 'prestige' and 'higher competence' that would serve the interest of the few who would use it as a screening device to higher positions and hence in maintaining their positions (Barret, 1994).

The decision to make the ex-colonial language, a language of the 'oppressors' an official language, was however greeted with contempt for several reasons. First and foremost, if people were ashamed or made ashamed of their languages, then they certainly lacked that minimum self-respect that is necessary to the healthy functioning of society (Armstrong, 1963). The use of English in pre-schools was therefore one way of encouraging children to despise their father's language (mother tongue), and the chances were that at the same time they would reject their father's wisdom hence lose their identity in the process (Armstrong, 1963). Secondly, English was a foreign language that lacked authenticity, a thing that may have made many Ugandans (young and old) to feel 'uncomfortably foreign'. Whereas language is supposed to help in bringing education close to learners and hence unleash their motivation (Trappes-Lomax, 1990), the use of a foreign language meant that educational goals were not integrated with Ugandan values and cultural contexts, and hence pre-school education continued to be alien and irrelevant to Ugandan children's needs. And lastly, the fact that English was an imported language meant that it was not easily teachable in the sense that it was difficult to ensure teacher proficiency in this foreign medium (Trappes-Lomax, 1990).

Summary

The achievement of independence may have given birth to the desire for ‘localization’ of the education sector, but unfortunately, this was not to be translated into reality. It could be argued that the continued imposition of colonial norms, values and language encouraged the destruction of the creativity of future Ugandans, while sowing a seed of devaluation, self hatred and a sense of inferiority (Nyamnjoh, 2004). All of these indirectly perpetuated the colonial order of dependency and elitism (Woolman, 2001), while at the same time compelling Ugandans (both young and old) to lighten their darkness both metaphysically and physically with western gratification (Nyamnjoh, 2004). This meant that the role of early childhood education was no longer aimed at socialization and cultural transmission, but instead it was inextricably interwoven with the quest for ‘national development’ and ‘modernization’ (Woolman, 2001) of the newly independent state. To the Ugandans, modernization and national development could only be achieved if pre-school and other levels of the education system continued to be an imitation of the colonial past, with little connection to the Ugandan way of life and development needs (Sifuna, 2001).

What should be mentioned however is that some elements of traditional early childhood education still exist among the Ugandan masses, especially through child gender role assignments in the home (Cunningham, 2001). But western approaches have continued to play a major role in influencing the ‘make-up’ of pre-schooling in Uganda today. This has been especially due to the belief among parents that an early start to a ‘western’ type of schooling almost guarantees their children to a college or university entry. This is because what parents want for their children, is to prepare them to be able to be job seekers who aspire to high status, well paid, materially comfortable occupations (Sklar, 1967). Although in some cases it is not a guarantee that those who complete college or university find their aspired jobs or any employment, but the hope that they will one day be employed or even underemployed is still more comforting than to be unschooled, or without a paper certificate from a college or university, prestigious or not (Marah, 2006). And thus, it has become the ‘norm’ that one who possesses a paper degree, diploma, or certificate can ‘bargain’, while those without, have ‘no cards to play’ (Hooker, 1975: p. 20).

The next chapter looks at how pre-school education provision has, after fifty-five years of independence, continued to be influenced and designed after western models. This has been mainly through international agreements that ultimately become international laws, with the aim of ‘improving’ both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision

CHAPTER TWO

Involvement of the International Community in Early Childhood Care and Education provision in Uganda (1990-2007)

Introduction

The goal of achieving quality and accessible education has been on the international agenda since the formation of the International Bill of Human Rights. This Bill consists of a series of treaties stretching from the late 1940s to the mid 1970s. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976). All of these bills emphasize the right of every individual to education (See Article 13 (1) of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural Rights; and Article 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). This objective was restated subsequently on many occasions by international treaties and United Nations conference declarations that emerged from a series of United Nations regional conferences on education in the 1980s. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the World Declaration on Education For All adopted at the World Conference on Education For All in Jomtien Thailand (1990), the Dakar Framework For Action (2000), and the Millennium Declaration (2000).

Although central to these treaties was a reiteration of ‘the right to education’, most of them are silent on two issues: Early Childhood Care and Education and Quality in education. First and foremost, the right to education is viewed as starting at the elementary (primary) level. The 1966 international covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in particular states in article 13 (2a) that:

The state parties to the present covenant recognize that, with view to achieving the full realization of this right-the right to education mentioned in article 13 (1), primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all

This is also restated in the 1989 convention on the Rights of the child in article 28 (1a), which states:

State parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall in particular, make primary education compulsory and available free to all

Secondly, although it was stated that everyone has the right to an education, little was mentioned about the achievement of quality in education. In this respect, earlier treaties were generally silent about how well education systems could and should be expected to perform in meeting the stated objectives. Thus in placing the emphasis upon access for all, the main focus was on the *quantity* aspect of education (UNESCO, 2005) rather than quality.

This remained so until 1990 at the World Declaration on Education For All at Jomtien Thailand, when both issues were discussed. In Article 5 of the declaration on Education For All, it is stated that ‘learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education’. This was later reiterated in the year 2000 in the Dakar Framework For Action, which recognized the need for ‘expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education...’ as the first of its six goals. The issue of quality is also central to these two conferences. Article 3 (1) of the 1990 World Declaration on Education For All states, ‘to this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded...’ Also, the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action recognizes that it is not quantity but quality education at all levels that matters. It states, ‘starting from early childhood and extending throughout life, the learners of the twenty-first century...require access to high quality educational opportunities...’ (p. 12).

It can be seen that the international community has acknowledged the importance of ECCE, making it one of the major policy goals in developing countries. The next section looks at the different ways the international community has been involved in at attempt to work towards the expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE provision.

PART ONE

Ways in which the International Community has taken part in improving quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision

Introduction

Both the 1990 World Declaration on Education For All and the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action, have been at the forefront of improving both quality and accessibility in ECCE in developing countries in general and Uganda in particular. In their effort to achieve this, they have done four things. First and foremost, they have defined what quality actually is at the classroom level, which encompasses areas such as appropriate curriculum with clearly defined curriculum goals; the use of active pedagogy child-centred learning; appropriate curriculum assessment; the use of a child's mother tongue in curriculum teaching; and an adequate learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Secondly, they have identified the major enabling factor at the school level- teacher quality and good school management, both of which play a major role in fostering classroom level quality determinants. Thirdly at the country level, they have identified factors that governments must put in place in order to foster quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. These include government commitment that is translated into appropriate fiscal measures, standard setting, and a strong partnership at all levels of government which encompasses partnership within government departments, NGOs and the private sector, partnership with parents and partnership with the community. And lastly at the international level, funding provision, formulation of international laws, provision of scientific knowledge, and provision of technical assistance have been spelt out as factors that aid the improvement of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. This chapter will address these issues in detail.

International Community's definition of quality determinants in Early Childhood Care and Education provision at the classroom level

When defining quality determinants at the school/classroom level, the international community views the quality of the curriculum used in ECCE provision as vital. In the 2000 Dakar Frame Work for Action, strategy 8 notes the importance of creating an educational environment with clearly defined levels of achievement, or curriculum goals. The main aim of

having curriculum goals in ECCE is to guide and ensure that provision is developmental, of high quality, and designed to create in young children a readiness to learn. Having well defined curriculum goals is crucial especially when the personnel in early childhood centres have low certification and/ or little training (UNESCO, 2004). Curriculum guidelines therefore help to ensure that teachers cover key learning areas (UNESCO, 2004) that are essential to children's overall development. Other than outlining the broad principles with which curricula should comply, curriculum guidelines do not prescribe specific curricular details. This is left to the individual providers to come up with their particular curriculum, within the given guidelines. Also, although curriculum guidelines provide targets of what children should achieve at the end of their pre-school years, it is not expected that every child will achieve all the targets. Some targets will not be achieved until primary school.

In ensuring quality provision, curriculum guidelines therefore offer ECCE providers with measurable goals and targets, which help them to operate both effectively and efficiently. Such targets and goals, once internalized by all those involved, become an instrument that directs their activities toward a common goal, hence improving the overall quality of activities.

In addition to a well-defined curriculum, a child-centred approach to teaching is deemed appropriate to teaching pre-school children. The 1990 World Declaration on Education For All stressed an approach to teaching, which is central to the constructivist theory of teaching. It states 'active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable in assuring learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potential' (p. 76). Active learning is a term for teaching and learning strategies that engage children in the learning process. This concept derives from a curriculum or teaching approach, which stresses the importance of the learner being in control over the learning experience rather than the teacher. In practice, this approach to curriculum teaching emphasizes 'motivation' and 'scaffolding' as key to learning. Thus, a child-centred classroom tries to create an environment, which will motivate the child to discover new skills and knowledge. This moves learning from a teacher led didactic instruction, to learning from a variety of child initiated activities. This interactive approach to curriculum teaching sees the child as an active constructor of knowledge. The role of the adult in this approach is therefore to engage children's interests through meaningful experiences by creating challenging but achievable goals and expectations, and supporting their learning (Newman and Roskos, 2005).

This approach to teaching views curriculum as a process, and as a result a number of elements are in constant interaction-the *children*, the *teacher*, and the *environment*. Learning therefore becomes an active exchange between these three elements, one key element being the teacher who offers substantial support to the child. What should be noted however is that child-centred teaching does not mean that teachers no longer initiate activities other than providing support. This approach to curriculum teaching provides a balance between teacher initiated and children initiated activities. The teacher designs and initiates activities, with the aim of fostering children's skills such as reasoning and problem-solving abilities. On the other hand, children also design and initiate activities, and the teacher participates in such activities with the aim of helping children to enhance their learning. What it precisely means therefore is that child-initiated activities take up the biggest part of the day. In some nursery schools, teacher initiated activities may take place in the morning, and usually this is the time when the teacher introduces a topic, or follow up (with the children) the progress of a project, leaving the whole afternoon for play-based activities. Other nurseries may choose to do teacher-led activities in the afternoon. Also, some nursery schools choose to limit teacher- initiated activities to one or two a day.

Because this approach makes learning active (children are mentally and physically engaged in the learning process); social (children work collaboratively with other children as well as adults); and reflective (learners get a chance to express and evaluate their own thinking), children develop stronger and longer attention span, they become knowledgeable, complex thinkers, active investigators, effective communicators and independent learners (Katz, 1993; Bruner, 1996; Blaustein, 2005). All this helps them to develop good interpersonal skills, positive attitude towards work, as well as enthusiasm and problem solving ability (Cooper, et al., 1990; Bennet, 1986; Forgaty and Bellanca, 1992). When followed through their childhood, children who attended pre-schools that used child-centred approaches were less likely to be treated for emotional impairments or disturbances, they were less likely to be arrested for a felony, they had long-term marriage relationships, they were more likely to take up employment, and they were also more likely to stay on in school and graduate from college (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997a; Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997b). All these could be attributed to the principles that are central to a child-centred teaching approach.

Coupled with an appropriate curriculum and a child-centred approach to teaching, an appropriate assessment of children's learning is also identified as one of the many components of good quality ECCE provision (Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2005). When talking of assessment in the early childhood years, it is not the 'pencil and paper' type of assessment. Rather, it is performance-based /authentic assessment. This type of assessment requires the teacher to measure children's learning and development in the context of their interaction and activities. In doing so, the teacher is able to depict a child's performance and development, by observing and recording the child's knowledge, skills and achievements in relation to specific developmental goals (Meisels, 1996). The main characteristics of this type of assessment are:

- *Multi-sourced*, in that evidence of growth and development is gained through a variety of activities such as drawing, classroom projects, cutting, gluing;
- *Contextual*, as information about children's growth and development is derived from day-to-day activities in the classroom;
- *Dynamic*, because data is gathered and added at many points in time, capturing both growth and development as they occur;
- *Integrated*, as curriculum and assessment go hand in hand;
- *Positive*, because measurement of children's progress is based on their achievements and not failures;
- *Collaborative*, as assessment involves not only the teacher, but also the parents/guardians of the child.

The purposes of assessment may be many (program accountability, improving teaching), but the main purpose is that of monitoring and enhancing children's learning and development. By employing the use of authentic assessment, the following are achieved:

- It helps the teacher to establish the level of diversity (ability, age) of the learners within the same pre-school classroom. By constantly observing children, the teacher is able to know the level of development at which each child is, as well as the (teaching and) learning styles of each child. Authentic assessment therefore helps the teacher to make more productive instructional planning decisions such as what kind of environment is to be provided; how lessons and experiences should be structured (Hill, 1992); what questions to ask; and what resources to be provided (Helm, et al.,

1998). The more information the teacher gathers, the more informed the decisions would be and the more effective the teacher is likely to be (Helm, et al., 1998). Such information helps the teacher to offer what could be termed as ‘just in time’ or bite sized’ approach to a long term learning journey. In this way, children are treated as individuals, each with his or her own unique set of characteristics, needs, and strengths (Epstein, 2003; Epstein, 2004; Epstein *et al.*, 2004);

- It helps in the early diagnosis of any learning problems/disability (Hill, 1992; Epstein, *et al.*, 2004). This helps in making decisions of whether that particular child’s needs could be met within the program and if so how that program needs to be supplemented. And if the program cannot fully meet such needs, what program is required. Experts agree that it is important to identify children with developmental delays or disorders as early as possible. Intervention at an early stage may have greater chances of reducing the long-term or short-term negative consequences of such disorders (Guralnick, 1998);
- It serves as a basis for reporting to parents (Hill, 1992) concerning what the child knows, understands, and can do across the areas of learning. Parents are the children’s first educators, as well as co-players (together with teachers) in their children’s lifelong learning. Accurate information about their child’s development and the difficulties their child may be facing, help them to work hand in hand with the teachers to ensure children’s optimal achievement.

Those advocating for authentic assessment stress that traditional standardized assessment should never be used in the early years as a means of providing information on children’s learning and development. In support of their argument, several reasons have been pointed out as follows:

- Younger children construct knowledge in experimental, interactive, concrete and hands-on ways (Bredecamp and Rosegrant, 1992) rather than through abstract reasoning and paper-pencil activities. They learn through touch and manipulation of objects. They express what they know by doing, not through abstract thinking;

- Pre-school is a period of rapid, episodic and sometimes uneven physical, motor, and linguistic development. Assessment at one point in time may not give a complete picture of learning as children can dramatically change in a short period of time. For example, a child may be behind in one area at the time of the assessment and completely masters the same area within a short period, or may be advanced in one area and behind in another area of development at the same time. With this in mind, the use of standard tests may lead to inaccurate results, which may be used to label young children. This makes authentic assessment the best way as it helps the teacher to put emphasis on children's weaker points and at the same time help further advancement of their strengths by appropriate 'individual child' planning of activities. This means that the 'one size fits all' method of formal assessment cannot in any way meet the diverse needs of children;
- Standardized assessment (which requires single answer responses within a specified time frame) puts enormous pressure on children. This in turn can inhibit children's thinking (Jensen, 1998) hence reducing the accuracy of the assessment;
- Children's performance and behavior are highly influenced by their emotional state (Epstein, *et al.*, 2004). Because of the pressure that formal assessment brings, they may respond unpredictably to the testing conditions. This as a result makes it very difficult to obtain accurate scores, making test scores across time relatively unstable (Epstein *et al.*, 2004);
- Formal tests focus on isolated evidence of children's achievements (Meisels, 1993) and development, yet all areas of a child's development – physical, social, emotional and language, are interrelated. Simply testing an isolated skill or related fact does not effectively measure a child's capability. Authentic assessment helps to accurately evaluate a child's learning and development by collectively examining his or her ability.

In addition to the use of authentic assessment, the issue of the language of instruction has also been highlighted as one of the many determinants of quality in ECCE provision. This has as a result, led the international community to argue that no other language should be used as a medium of instruction other than a child's mother tongue (Dakar Framework For Action, 2000). The term mother tongue is sometimes misinterpreted as referring to the language of

one's mother. But mother tongue is the term used to refer to the native language a child acquires as his or her first language, a language that connects or identifies him or her to a certain country. Other than meaning one's mother's tongue, the term precisely means a source or origin as in mother country or land.

The overwhelming advocacy on the use of mother tongue in ECCE provision, has been as a result of research findings that point to its importance to children's learning and development in a number of important ways:

- A child's native language has been found to be a base for thinking (Thondhlana, 1992). When children are engaged in activities, they are most likely to both consciously and subconsciously use their native language. In doing so, they are trying to relate what they are learning at that particular point in time, to what they already know. Mother tongue therefore becomes a tool for children to plan, clarify thoughts and explanations, and make comparisons. Children's cognitive development therefore, occurs more effectively in a language that they know well (Kembo, 2000);
- Optimal first language acquisition provides a firm base for the acquisition of school language (Thondhlana, 1992). By encouraging the full development of such language therefore, children do not find it difficult to learn a second language;
- There is a strong correlation between learning to read in one's mother tongue and subsequent reading achievements in a second language. Research in this area has demonstrated that literacy strategies learned in a child's native language, transfer to reading and writing situations in the second language without having to be re-learned. In this way, the mother tongue becomes an essential tool in facilitating the acquisition of the language that will become the medium of instruction for the rest of the school years (UNESCO, 2005). As a result, children join formal schooling when they are well prepared to learn the school language, and hence succeed educationally (Cummins, 2003);
- By positively encouraging the use of a children's native language in pre-school programs, the linguistic diversity of the world is kept alive (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004), as well as the transmission of cultural traditions to later generations. Mother tongue

therefore, becomes one way of preventing the disappearance of the languages and cultures of the world;

- Because pre-school children rely heavily on the use of language during both formal and informal activities, the use of a mother tongue, a language in which they can express themselves clearly, helps them to both acquire and enhance effective communication skills;
- By instructing them in a language that they know, children are provided with the same opportunities to learn and develop regardless of their backgrounds (Gaspard, 2005). This as a result makes children feel valued, feel good about coming to school, resulting in their increased enthusiasm to learn. And because they understand what the teacher says in class, they are able to actively participate in all the learning activities, to demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge, as well as having the courage to ask questions (UNESCO, 2004).

Given the importance of using a child's mother tongue as the language of instruction in ECCE, it is surprising that an increasing number of indigenous and minority children in Africa and Asia, are being educated through the medium of a dominant language rather than their mother tongue. One such dominant language is English, introduced and used by the missionaries in their established pre-schools, and also used in Sunday schools for the indoctrination of new converts (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004). English has to date continued to be favoured in many countries as a medium of instruction right from pre-school as an international *lingua franca* because of its neutrality and instrumentality. And because of increased globalization, English is seen as vital in a country's ability to access knowledge, as well as its participation in global trade and commerce (Sure and Webb, 2000). But in spite of its 'importance' and hence its introduction at pre-school level, it has been emphasized that it should not be used as a medium of instruction, other than a child's mother tongue (The 2000 Dakar Framework For Action), not until at the age of ten years (Kumar, 2005.)

Evidence from research findings have demonstrated that the use of English or any other language other than the child's mother tongue may harm children's cognitive and emotional development, as well as their general performance in school. And the younger the child, the more devastating the effect could be. This is so because a child's native language is not only used for communication purposes, but it also demonstrates that particular child's heritage as

well as his or her culture. While they may not be physically punished for speaking their mother tongue, the use of English or any other dominant language sends a strong message to the child, that if they want to be accepted by the teacher and/or the entire school society, they have to renounce allegiance to their home language and culture (Cummins, 2003). By ‘rejecting’ their language and culture children leave a central part of who they are-their identity, at the school gates (Cummins, 2003; The Economic Times, 2006).

Mother tongue is one way of holding families, cultures and communities together. But because of the way pre-schools react when used by children, a message is sent to children that such language is of ‘less importance’, or is altogether ‘useless’. Such a message is most likely to affect children’s relationship with their parents, relatives and the community as a whole, hence affecting children’s familial and social integration (Gaspard, 2005). Children are more likely to ‘dislike’ talking in their native language in favour of the newly acquired language. If parents, relatives, and the community in which they live do not know and/or understand the so-called ‘school language’ they are most likely to be left out of the equation. Also, the mother tongue is very fragile at this stage, and as a result, the child might lose it altogether (Cummins, 2003). And because language is a means of transmitting a native language as well as the cultural traditions to later generations, the loss of a mother tongue may mean the total disappearance of certain languages and cultures of the world altogether. It is for example estimated, that 90% of the world’s native languages may be dead in one hundred years time. Therefore, instead of maintaining and promoting the linguistic diversity that children bring with them, pre-schools are promoting ‘linguistic genocide’ (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001) by intentionally or inadvertently transferring one group of children to another group (one of the definitions of genocide by the United Nations Genocide Convention) (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001).

Such practices in pre-schools contradict the very essence of education (Cummins, 2003). Because of the centrality of the native language in children’s learning and development, children are less likely to receive meaningful education (Gaspard, 2005). This is due to the fact that they are not given the opportunity to start from the known to explore the unknown (Gaspard, 2005). Because they are unfamiliar with the ‘school language’ such children are likely to end up bored, feel undervalued, isolated, lonely, and exhausted (Cummins, 2003) with the demands of the new language. By doing so, schools are actually violating children’s rights to an appropriate education (Cummins, 2003; Gaspard, 2005). Article 4 (3) of the 1992

United Nations on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minority urges states to ‘take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue’. This right to education was also upheld by the nations of the world at the 1992 Dakar Framework for Action. 192 nations agreed on the importance of using a child’s mother tongue as a prerequisite to achieving not only equality, but also quality education for all children. In Africa, although most countries are bilingual or multilingual, through the 1997 Harare Declaration, African countries acknowledged their ethno-linguistic pluralism as a normal way of life and as a rich resource for development and progress. And as a result Africa representatives at the Harare conference declared their commitment to seriously raising the status of indigenous languages usage in education (Thondhlana, 1992).

Given the overwhelming importance of children’s native language in their education and overall development, educators agree that pre-schools should build on the experiences and knowledge that children bring with them (Senadeera, 2001). It is through language that we shape our experiences, develop our thoughts, structure our community, explore our customs, make sense of what is right and wrong, give expression to our hopes and ideas, and articulate our values. By promoting the use of the mother tongue therefore, children not only feel comfortable and at-ease in their day-to-day interactions in pre-school settings, but it is also one way of reflecting and celebrating a child’s culture, and ethnic background. And because the language we speak helps to define who we are (European Commission, 2004), it becomes the means by which different groups within the society maintain their identity (Senadeera, 2001).

With regards to learning environments, goal 6 of the 2000 Dakar framework acknowledges that what takes place in classrooms and other learning settings is paramount to ensuring quality ECCE provision. These include the physical infrastructure and facilities (UNESCO, 2005) which encompass the indoor classroom organization, the outdoor environment, health and safety, as well as general approach to discipline.

When looking at the indoor environment, the amount of space that children have contributes to the amount and level of learning they will attain. The indoor space not only permits children to move freely, but it also determines the nature and extent of how the classroom is

organized. Classroom organization here refers to how the physical indoor environment is set in order to facilitate children's learning. The key word in achieving a good classroom structure is 'careful planning' on the part of the teachers. Each area in the classroom is planned in great detail, and time is set aside for staff to discuss and suggest (Chapman, 2005) ways of achieving an inviting and accessible environment to all children. For many children, the classroom may be their first experience of an education establishment outside their home and as such needs to be a welcoming and exciting place to spend what is a long day away from home. It is therefore vital, that classrooms capture children's natural curiosity and provide them with appropriate areas to learn and flourish (Chapman, 2005).

A typical pre-school room is divided into different learning areas, which include but are not limited to:

- The home corner;
- The manipulative area;
- The block/woodwork/construction area;
- The rug area;
- The music and movement area;
- The texture/ sensory area;
- The book/literacy area;
- The art and crafts area;
- The studio (painting) area;
- The mathematics/manipulative area;
- The science area;
- The computer (ICT) area.

It is important that the classroom has a high degree of spatial differentiation (Sanoff, 1995) separating the different learning areas. Activity areas may be separated by physical objects such as movable partitions and cabinets or by visual cues such as different flooring materials, wall colours, changes in lightings and ceiling, or floor heights (Passantino, 1993; Caples, 1996). Classroom arrangement is one-way of communicating to children. The way both furniture and equipment are arranged help children to know what to do and where. For example, a corner with soft cushions, cuddly toys and books, tells children that it is a place to go when they want peace and quiet. Spatially well-defined classrooms have been found to promote a range of children's development compared to moderately or poorly defined

classrooms. Research has found that children develop more exploratory behaviour, good peer and verbal interaction, fantasy, associative and cooperative play, independence and autonomy (Chapman, 2005), and decreased aggressive behaviour (Moore, 1987). Although they leave the room for other activities like outdoor playtime, music, and gym, a conducive classroom environment offers children with emotional security, which is provided by a small stable community and familiar environment.

In addition to ensuring a conducive classroom layout, it is also important that all the areas in the classroom are equipped with appropriate learning materials for the age groups of children being served. Instructional materials are very important in that they provide opportunity for children to broaden and deepen their knowledge by having access to a variety of first hand developmentally appropriate experiences (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2004). Materials in each activity area should be clearly labelled with pictures and words, and also stored at the child's level to encourage maximum independence. It is advised that learning materials are changed depending upon children's interests, the time of year and ongoing themes or projects (The University of Tennessee, College of Social Work Office, 2005). It is also of paramount importance that learning materials comprise a variety of things like books, clothes, musical instruments, and dolls from different ethnicities and race (Sanders, 2007).

Equally important are the chairs that children use both during free play and teacher-directed activities. Chairs and tables in early years settings are a low or scaled down version of an adult chair and table. Early childhood researchers and educators agree on the importance of appropriate chairs and tables for pre-school children's optimal learning and development. Children sit on average up to 30% of the time spent in a setting each day (Harper, *et.al.*, 2002), either in teacher initiated or child initiated activities or a combination of both. The correct chair and table height is determined mainly by two factors: the distance between the chair seat and the tabletop, and the height of the chair seat from the floor. The recommended measurement of the distance between the chair seat and the tabletop is 20 centimeters (except for the very smallest and largest chairs).

Concerning the issue of the height of the chair from the floor, this is largely dependent on the size of the child, with the lower leg length determining the correct seat height. When measuring the correct chair height, a child is seated comfortably with feet flat on the floor and knees bent at right angles (for an illustration, refer to Appendix One; and for further

international guidelines refer to Appendix Two). Although young children's measurements vary greatly and change rapidly, this should provide the correct chair height for a child (Hedge, 2006). Age appropriate furniture allow children to be comfortable and maintain proper body support and posture there by helping them to focus on learning and playing rather than focusing on their own discomfort (The University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office, 2005; Hedge, 2006). It also significantly decreases the chance of a severe injury if a child were to fall (Harper, *et. al.*, 2002).

Still within the indoor environment, it is vital that children are exposed to a classroom daily schedule. Children thrive on having a consistent routine that provides activities designed to meet individual needs and to foster their overall development (Townsend-Butterworth, 2006). They benefit from a schedule that is familiar and predictable but not rigid, and one that has both balance and variety. What should be noted is that any division of the day is unique to each pre-school, and the length of time allocated to each activity depends on the length of time the nursery is opened each day. However, the schedule in a high-quality pre-school classroom is often broken into blocks of time for different types of learning and instruction. These include (but are not limited to) circle time, free-play, group activity time, snack time, outdoor play, clean-up time, quiet (relaxation) time, story time, and lunch-time.

Schedules not only enable the teacher to know when to provide time for exploration and discovery, when to teach directly, when to provide opportunities for children to practice skills, and when to encourage creativity, but they also help children to know what will happen and when (Townsend-Butterworth, 2002). Routines therefore help children to focus on the various parts of the day, providing closure for one activity and preparing them to move on to the next. It is not surprising therefore, that if the regular schedule is unexpectedly changed, children can become quite indignant, and emphatically inform their teacher for example, that outdoor play *always* comes after snack! (Poole *et al.*, 2006).

The outdoor environment is equally important as the indoor environment in ensuring quality provision. Although the time children spend indoors might be different from the time spent outdoors, the outdoor environment is not separate from the indoor environment. Both environments are viewed as one learning environment, with the outdoor environment mirroring and complementing the indoor environment (Chapman, 2005). Outdoor environment is mainly for developing children's gross motor skills, although to some extent

fine motor skills are developed. Quality nursery schools design the outdoor environment with a variety of resources such as climbing apparatuses, swinging equipment, slides, ropes, car tyres, and wheeled equipment (tricycles and bicycles). All of these provide children with a special stage of action to practice their emerging skills, hence resulting in their optimal development.

Quality pre-schools not only equip their play-grounds with the above mentioned equipment, but they also equip them with green space that emphasizes natural elements such as vegetation, hills, logs (Waisman Centre, University of Wisconsin, 2000), animals, insects, water and sand (White and Stoecklin, 2005). Limiting outdoor areas to gross motor activities and manufactured equipment has been criticized on grounds that it falls short of the potential to provide rich play and learning environments for children (White and Stoecklin, 2005). This view is based on the belief that outdoor experiences should provide an opportunity for children to interact with the natural world, opportunities for adventure and discovery, exploration and experimentation that are provided in an informally and naturalistic outdoor space (Waisman centre University Wisconsin, 2000). Two new disciplines that support the above argument are ‘eco-psychology’ and ‘evolutionary psychology’. They both suggest that humans are genetically programmed by evolution with the love for the natural outdoors. Evolutionary psychologists term this love as ‘biophilia’ (White and Stoecklin, 2005). If this human attraction to nature is not given the opportunity to be exercised and hence flourish during the early years of life, the opposite ‘biophobia’ (White and Stoecklin, 2005), the ‘fear of nature’, may develop.

Educators and psychologists agree that by providing appropriate outdoor space and resources, children are helped to be healthy (Clement, 2004; Janz *et al.*, 2000; Clement, 2004; Shutton and Naughton, 2001); to develop their brain (Healy, 1990; Meltz, 1999; Jenson, 2000; Literacy Trust, 2002); to be creative (White and Stoecklin, 2005); to develop empathy (Hughes, 1981); to develop safety skills (Guldborg, 2001; Morre and Wong, 1997); to develop competence (Singer and Singer, 2000; Guddemi and Eriksen, 1992) and to develop independence and autonomy (Bartlett, 1996).

Health and safety both indoors and outdoors is also of paramount importance if quality is to be achieved. The World Health Organization (2003) defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’.

Safety on the other hand is defined as ‘the condition of being safe-free from danger, risk or injury (The Free Dictionary, 2005). The importance of ensuring the provision of both safe and healthy environments is emphasized by the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action, which states that ‘young children must be nurtured in safe...environments that allow them to become healthy, alert and secure and be able to learn (p. 15). Children have little or no idea of danger. It is therefore the centre’s responsibility to ensure that they are safe and healthy.

In order to ensure safety, quality pre-schools constantly check and maintain all facilities. They properly guard all electrical and gas equipment, children are supervised at all times, criminal searches are carried out on all teachers and other employees in the school, fire safety practices are put in place, there are first aid boxes and a trained personnel to administer first aid on the premises, classrooms are not over crowded, and they also ensure that all potentially dangerous products such as medicines and cleaning appliances are not stored within children’s reach. On the other hand, in order to ensure health among children and adults, schools maintain strict practices such as personal hygiene, immunizations records of all children, daily cleaning routines and schedules, proper sanitation, clean drinking water, proper food preparation and storage, good dental health, and good indoor air quality.

Good health and safety is emphasized in pre-school settings because of the effect they have on children’s overall development. Poor health and safety can lead to illnesses and accidents. For example poor hygiene such as dirty food preparation areas as well as poor hand washing can lead to food contamination. The result is such diseases as diarrhoea, or the deadly E-coli that can result in kidney failure among children. In many instances, such infections have led to death (BBC News, 2006). Such incidences show that both health and safety should not be an option but rather, should be part and parcel of the running of any nursery school. Young children have the right to play and interact in environments that foster their optimal overall development. This can only be achieved if provision is both safe and healthy.

With regards to discipline, those writing about approaches to discipline recommend that ‘discipline’ in the early years should not be viewed as ‘punishment’, but rather as a ‘learning’ opportunity. Punishment is ‘reaction’ to misbehaviour usually in a hurtful way (Parenting and Child health, 2007) as it involves the application of physical pain. And although punishment may work in the short run, research has shown that it does not work in the long run. This is because other than releasing anger in an adult, it does not teach the child appropriate

behaviour. Thus, the child is not taught an alternative way of reacting when faced with the same 'problem'. The only result of punishment is that it creates 'humiliation' and even more anger in the child. Discipline on the other hand, is a means of helping children to learn acceptable ways to deal with their feelings and desires (Parenting and Child Health, 2007). Teachers who 'discipline' create a supportive relationship between them and the child, they try to understand the reasons for the behaviour (jealousy, a feeling of not getting enough positive attention, frustration, as well as stress), and they still respect the feelings of the child (Bailey, 1996). The result is that 'discipline' makes children feel safe, worthy, and still part and parcel of the learning or classroom community. This is because 'discipline' is used as 'guidance' as opposed to 'reaction' to an unwanted behaviour, and it is based on communication or the use of 'words' rather than physical contact. A child's 'misbehaviour' therefore, becomes a 'teaching' opportunity for the teacher.

This approach acknowledges that children are in the process of learning 'acceptable behaviour', and the role of adults is to teach and 'point' them in the right direction. Strategies used in this approach include explaining and showing children the consequences of their undesirable behaviour such as time out and withholding privileges. Thus rather than yelling, hitting or getting worked up by a child's misbehaviour, and hence teach the child that it is right to get out of control and be aggressive, it is the adult's role to 'model' appropriate reaction or expression of feelings. As argued by Bailey (1997), adults cannot teach appropriate behaviour and skills if they do not possess them. Being role models mean that adults 'must' keep composed, which in turn helps them to stay in control of the situation and in charge of the child. Research findings in this area support that discipline works better than punishment, and that those children who are punished develop differently from children who are disciplined. Because 'communication' is used as opposed to 'aggression', aggressive acts among children are minimised and hence the creation of safe classrooms and safe schools for children; and because teachers do not use threats, which in turn create stress and insecurity among children, children's learning and development is enhanced (Bailey, 1997).

International Community's view of the enabling factors for quality determinants at the school level

Enabling factors at the pre-school level include the quality of teachers and managers. The quality of teachers that work in pre-school settings is an important facilitator of quality provision at the school level. According to UNESCO (2005) teachers are the most important

resource in education, and as such, they remain the single most important school-based factor related to student's achievement (Knobloch and Whittington, 2002). This notion is consistent with a large body of research (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Such research confirms the view that pre-schools can only be as good as their teachers. Thus, regardless of how high the standards of pre-schools are, how up to date their technology is, or even how innovative their program is, all their efforts to provide quality ECCE would amount to nothing if their teachers were not of good quality. What should be acknowledged here however is that teacher quality can be extremely difficult to define and assess as it depends not only on observable and stable indicators like content knowledge, ability, or aptitude, but also on behaviour and the nature of the relationship that teachers maintain with their pupils. It is true to argue, however, that teacher quality can be influenced by a number of factors. These include training (UNESCO, 2005), good terms and conditions of service (Jomtien, 1990) and class size (Education For All Assessment Report, 2000).

Research on teacher training confirms that pre-service training as well as continuous professional development, influence the approaches that adults adopt in the pre-school settings, all of which foster children's overall development regardless of their gender, culture, as well as their socio-economic backgrounds. This is contrary to the assumption made decades ago that children's backgrounds, especially their socio-cultural and socio-economic factors, were the most determining factors in their behaviour and attitudes development. Teacher training is seen as one way of preparing teachers for the challenge of a changing world, by equipping them with effective teaching practices and the ability to work collaboratively with other teachers, members of the community and parents (UNESCO, 2005).

Although teacher training is seen as important, there exist conflicting notions as regards the type and level of education appropriate to produce quality teachers. Some studies have concluded that what matters is the overall level of education (a degree or masters degree level holder) regardless of the area of specialization (Kontos and Wilcox-Herzog, 2001). Other studies have concluded that it is not the level of education, but the type of education (specialized training in ECCE) that matters (Cassidy *et al.*, 1995). Yet others have concluded that what matters most are the level of education and specialized teacher training in child development and early education (Bowman, *et al.*, 2001; Howes, 1997; Lobman *et al.*, 2005).

However, although research does not provide suitable patterns of staff training and qualification between and within countries, there seems to be a consensus that ECCE staff require specialized training (Kamerman, 2001) as the determining factor to ensuring quality teaching and hence positive outcomes for children. Such training is grounded in the knowledge base of pre-school education, which covers areas such as child development; health, safety and nutrition; foundations of education and learning; curriculum and pedagogy; classroom management; family, culture and community relationships; observation, assessment, and evaluation; learning environments; and professionalism. Teachers who have specialized training have been found to use developmentally appropriate approaches to teaching and discipline. They are also most likely to encourage children to achieve success by giving children confidence to face new challenges and demonstrating pleasure in each child's work and progress. They also give respect to each child and in turn expect that respect back from the children (Wall, 2005). Teachers with such practices have been found to be the determining factor for both short-term and long-term outcomes for children. Children are more sociable and exhibit more cooperative behavior; demonstrate higher levels of language skills; demonstrate higher levels of general knowledge; have greater task persistence; exhibit more developed language use; and perform high level cognitive tasks than children who are cared for by less qualified adults (Lobman *et al.*, 2005; Howes , 1997).

In addition to initial teacher training, continuous professional development of teachers is equally important. Professional development can be defined as anything that enhances someone's skills, knowledge, and personal qualities, to help them foster their performance and hence achieve better their working aims in the workplace throughout their professional career (Mason, 1999). The common pathways to professional development include (but are not limited to) demonstration lessons, consultative site visits, workshops, conferences, and distant learning. There may be differing pathways, but the overall mission of any professional development is to support people to achieve high standards in whatever they do. Approaches to professional development are numerous, and research in this area over the years has produced conflicting results as to what the best approach to professional development is. Some have argued that professional development efforts should be teacher initiated (Mason, 1999) and therefore should focus primarily on classroom based day-to-day activities. Others have argued that focusing on an individual is shortsightedness as professional development entails more than an individual teacher. They therefore suggest that instead of focusing on the practitioner (the teacher), a more organizational or even systemic approach with a bigger

vision beyond an individual teacher or school is necessary (Tye and Tye, 1984; Wade, 1984; Guskey, 1995).

Generally, professional development seems to be contextual, and therefore what works in one school is less likely to work in another school. Even programs that share the vision of attaining comparable goals may need to follow very different pathways of professionally developing their workforce (Gunskey, 1995). This is solely due to the fact that the teaching and learning process is a complex one, and it occurs in contexts that differ from each other (Guskey, 1995). Thus, while one school might be in need of a professional development approach that is practitioner specific, a more organizational or systemic approach might be best suited for another school. Also, while a gradual approach to professional development might suit one school, another might be in an urgent need of an immediate and drastic approach (Gunskey, 1995). This therefore implies that although some general principles may apply throughout, most will need to be adapted, at least in part, to the unique characteristics of that setting. Nonetheless, the available literature provides some guiding principles as to what constitutes an effective professional development approach:

- It is focused on and embedded in teacher practice, and therefore not disconnected from it (Gunskey, 1995; Rueda, 1998);
- It is focused on student outcome and not just individual teacher needs (Rueda, 1998);
- It is an individual, school, as well as a collective responsibility at all levels of the system (Gunskey, 1995);
- It should be informed by the best available research on effective teaching and learning (ACME, 2006);
- It should be collaborative as opposed to individual inquiry (Gunskey, 1995; Clair and Adgar, 1999);
- It should involve both reflection and feedback on results (Gunskey, 1995);
- It should involve follow ups (Gunskey, 1995);
- Rather than being episodic and fragmented, it should be ongoing, supported and fully integrated into the culture and operations of the system-schools, networks and regions (Susanne, 2006; Clair and Adger, 1999).

Professional development does not only mean the provision of time, resources and personal staff support, but is one way of helping early childhood teachers achieve increased teacher

knowledge and self-esteem. With increased teacher knowledge, even though teachers may have gone through formal teacher training, this does not however translate into continuous effectiveness. As the teaching profession is dynamic in nature, becoming and developing as an effective teacher is a journey that stretches from pre-service experiences up to the end of one's professional career. This implies that in order to remain an accomplished early childhood teacher, learning must be a lifelong process. Early childhood practices constantly change, which means that there are always practices to be developed, skills to be learned and changes in knowledge and techniques with which to keep up-to-date with. Continuous professional development therefore, is the only way through which ECCE teachers are helped to remain informed, responsive, current, and continually refine their curriculum content, pedagogical and methodological skills. Only by continually informing teachers with the latest research, techniques and knowledge in the profession, can they be helped to stay effective and re-energized in their career. Professional development therefore provides teachers with the opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge, which in turn gives them the ability to perform their duties to the standards required by their employers, (Mason, 1999) as well as those set by the state.

With regards to increased self-esteem and self confidence, we have already noted that the area of ECCE constantly changes, which means that initial teacher training alone, though very important, is not enough to equip early childhood teachers with the skills and abilities to cope with the demands in the profession. Working as an early year's practitioner does not only entail working with children, but it also involves working with parents/guardians on a daily basis as well as the community in which the program operates. By continuously equipping teachers with the latest knowledge and skills, they are helped to feel capable in executing their duties, a feeling which gives rise to good self-esteem and self-confidence. Simply said, a person's performance will not exceed his or her self-esteem or self-confidence. Self-esteem and self-confidence allow teachers to have a positive attitude towards their work and their own abilities, hence increased efficacy.

Coupled with both pre-service and in-service teacher training, good teacher compensation is also likely to improve the quality of services offered (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000). Research in this area has demonstrated that there is a strong link between early childhood educator's pay and the quality (Whitebrook and Phillips, 1989) of services that they offer to children under their care. This is because pay strongly influences the behaviour of teachers, as

well as the length of time they stay in a given setting (Howes and Hamilton, 1993). Also, salaries and conditions of services can have a significant impact on the composition of the profession and the quality of teaching. Teachers' salary prospects, relative to those in other comparable jobs can affect the decisions by quality teachers to enter or to remain in the profession. They can also affect how hard people work at teaching and how motivated they are (UNESCO, 2005). Precisely, meager compensation tends to translate into meager programs, while more generous pay translates into better learning experiences for children (Institute of Early Education Research, 2003). Teachers who are adequately compensated are more likely to have a high working morale and feel more satisfied in their job (Kontos, *et al.*, 1994). Such teachers are able to give 'their all' in their work; they are more nurturing and more responsive (Kontos, *et al.*, 1994; Whitebrook, *et al.*, 1993) to children's needs. Such a rich and relaxing atmosphere is very beneficial to children who rely more on adults in their day-to-day interactions. Good pay has also been associated with low staff turnover (Howes and Hamilton, 1993). Centres that offer a good wage are able to retain skilled and educated staff. Because of this continued and stable relationship, children in such centres have been found to have good language and social skills.

Among middle-income countries for which data is available, teacher qualification standards and salary level (entry level with minimum qualification) do not differ greatly between pre-primary and primary levels. In lower income developing countries, there is a tendency not to view early childhood educators as professionals. This translates into lower salaries as compared to the salaries of teachers at other levels of education. Research has shown that lower compensation negatively affects teacher behaviour and also leads to high teacher absenteeism (UNESCO, 2005). Even when they turn up for work, if they are less satisfied with their job, their pattern of interaction with children under their care can be adversely affected; they are more likely to be less sensitive, less responsive and less nurturing, and they are also less likely to give their all when planning learning environments for children. This does not work for the benefits of children at all, because it is at this age that they rely heavily on stable and continued relationships with adults. This can most likely translate into poor quality of care that children receive (Institute for Early Education Research, 2003). As a result, children are more likely to be stressed, form poor attachments, and have delayed language and social development (Birch and Ladd, 1996; Birch *et al.*, 1999).

Adequate teacher/child ratio is another factor that can impinge on the quality of teachers and the services that they offer to children under their care. Pupil/teacher ratio is the ratio of the total number of pupils to the total number of teachers at any given level (UNESCO, 2005). This precisely means that there must be at least one adult for every so many children. Ratio is determined by a number of factors; group size, the size and layout of the building, age range, teacher training, the type of program, the length of time children spend in the setting each day, and location of the program (UNESCO, 2005).

Teacher/child ratio varies from country to country as well as within countries. In Scotland and Germany teacher/child ratio for the three to five years is 1:10, (Kagohashi, 2004). While in Sweden, the ratio is 1:5 for the three to five year olds. Japan and some countries in Africa have the highest teacher/child ratios at this level of education. In Japan, the ratio stands at 1:20 for three year olds and 1:30 for the four to five year olds (Kagohashi, 2004). In Sub Saharan Africa, forty percent of the countries for which data are available, have a teacher child ratio of 1: 25-30 (UNESCO, 2005).

Existing research might not be sufficient to determine the optimal teacher child ratio, but both researchers and early childhood professionals agree that low ratios lead to quality ECCE outcomes. The notion behind setting low teacher child ratios is that children's optimal development depends largely on their close emotional security with adults. The aim of setting low ratios therefore is to create conditions that can maximize and/or enhance the quality of relationships between adults and children. Low teacher/child ratio means that teachers more effectively help children to learn, grow, and develop, by providing appropriate and/or individual attention to each child (Saluja, *et al*, 2002). Children are able to experience positive interactions with their teachers as well as other children, and engage more in independent activities. The result is children with secure relationships with their teachers, good language and social skills, as well as independence. A high teacher/child ratio on the other hand, has been associated with staff harshness, staff insensitivity to children's needs, the adoption of more structured and teacher controlled classroom routines, children's exposure to danger, the use of developmentally inappropriate practices, as well as less support for parental involvement (NPC Pre-Kindergarten Framework, 2004; Belsky, 1984). The results are children with less secure relationships with their teachers, poor social skills, poor verbal skills and shorter attention span (Bowman et al., 2001). It therefore appears that smaller group sizes and lower teacher/child ratios are a strong predictor of quality in early childhood provision,

although this is inextricably linked to other elements such as staff education and training, and staff salaries (Munton, *et al.*, 2002).

Good school leadership is also identified as a prerequisite for quality ECCE provision. It is argued that just as any organization requires a good manager, pre-school settings need good management in order to attain their set goals (Tavcar, 2000). Without good quality management therefore, it is hard to imagine that pre-schools can be in a position to operate both efficiently and effectively (Tavcar, 2000). It is the manager's responsibility to plan, organize, coordinate, lead, and supervise all human, financial and physical resources in order to ensure the smooth running of a given program. All the above functions/responsibilities are immensely important in attaining a program of good quality, and it is the coordination and combination of all of them that lead to an effective management system.

Quality managers mean quality decisions. Quality managerial decisions are influenced by such things as qualification, as well as the years of experience in the field (Fiene, 2002). These provide managers with such skills as creative problem-solving, strategic communication skills, professional ethics (McNamara, 2007), critical thinking, as well as contextual knowledge and expertise. The results are effective day-to-day running of the nursery; good individual staff support; establishment of good team-work among all staff members; good parental relationships; effective deployment and allocation of specific areas of responsibility to all staff members; existence of a well-organized system of staff review and development; existence of clear set of aims for the nursery that are shared by all the stakeholders; existence of a comprehensive set of appropriate policies; frequent use of questionnaires to seek parents' views about the nursery; and formulation of a development plan that is appropriate to the needs of the nursery. All of the above help in the attainment of quality early childhood provision for children.

In striving to achieve quality therefore, a capable and qualified manager is at least as important as well founded specific expertise of teachers. As observed by Tavcar (2000), pre-school management can be equated to an orchestra. For a good orchestra to be formed, it takes more than the existence of good musicians. Thus, at the heart of any good performing orchestra, is a good conductor. And in order to be a good conductor, much more is needed than the knowledge of playing one or more instruments. One has to acquire superior and additional knowledge to that needed for playing the different musical instruments. Thus in

relation to ECCE, having good teachers but with no trained director, may not automatically translate into a quality ECCE program. Regardless of the level of qualification or the years one spends working at the classroom level as a teacher therefore, once a person assumes leadership responsibility, it is important that they get training in leadership skills. They may be excellent people, but leading a program through ‘trial and error’ might result into only average quality provision.

In developed countries, the recognition of the importance of developing leadership skills is reflected in the formulation of explicit policies on the professional development of leaders. As a result, such training is provided through specialized courses (UNESCO, 2005). In Scotland for example, ECCE managers can access training by undertaking a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in management studies, which are developed, accredited, assessed and certified by the Scottish Qualification Authority (Skillset, 2007). The reverse is true in Africa, in that only a few countries have explicit policies, and few Ministries of Education draw up professional development strategies (World Bank, 2000) for managers in the early years. Instead, this initiative has over the years been carried out and funded by the World Bank, the Norwegian Government and other partner agencies especially through the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (World Bank, 2001).

International Community’s view of the enabling factors for quality determinants at the country level

Conducive factors at the country level are seen as very important if countries are to achieve quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. The international community views the strong political will of governments as the bedrock on which quality and accessible ECCE stands. This is emphasized by the Dakar Framework For Action (2000), which although recognizing the importance of international help, reminds governments that to a great extent, delivery of quality ECCE services depend mainly on their commitment to educating their children. It states:

Governments must make firm political commitments and allocate sufficient resources ...an absolutely essential step to meeting the state’s obligation to all of its citizens. This means increasing the share of national income and budgets allocated to education (within that, to ECCE) (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000’ p. 17)

As noted by UNESCO (2005) aggregate expenditure on education is a good indicator of how governments are committed to education quality and accessibility. Such investment becomes even more needed in developing countries where parents struggle with high costs for their children's education. Although the level of investment in ECCE differ remarkably across countries (UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood Education Financing, 2004), and depends on such things as the size of a country's GDP, public investment in other sectors, demography (UNESCO, 2005), the level of corruption (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000), and the relative importance given to ECCE (UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood Education Financing, 2004), it has been argued that an investment of at least 1% of a country's GDP should be spent on this sector (UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood Education Financing, 2004). Some might argue that this percentage is made with European countries in mind and only suitable for them given their level of development, but this percentage could also be afforded by developing countries. This is because on average, developing countries spend 2% of their annual total GDP on the army (CIA World Fact Book, 2005). A 1% investment may in itself not be a guarantee of quality and accessibility, but it may boost the level of resources available (UNESCO, 2005) for the sub-sector.

In addition to allocating finances, strong partnership among all stakeholders is deemed vital. This is emphasized by the 1990 World Declaration on Education For All and the 2000 Dakar framework for Action. The Dakar Framework for Action states: 'the indispensable role of the state ... must be supplemented and supported by bold and comprehensive educational partnerships at all levels of society, (which) precisely means that Education For All implies the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders' (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000: 8 - 12). The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All goes further by breaking down the kind of stakeholders including the government (cooperation between ministries and departments at the same level, as well as between different levels), Non Governmental Organizations, the private sector, local communities, parents, religious groups (The World Declaration on Education for All, 1990), as well as businesses.

Partnership is emphasized given the fact that achieving quality ECCE is in many cases affected by isolated initiatives of the different stakeholders. Such initiatives however useful may remain modest given the fact that effective ECCE approach, especially with regard to accessibility, requires countrywide action. Absence of strong partnerships and networking results in weakening the efforts of the different actors involved by creating a feeble mass of

action; slowing down activities through duplication of efforts, and the promotion of competition which in turn de-motivates and degenerates the much needed solidarity of all the actors.

In addition to allocating finances and ensuring a strong partnership at all levels, the international community recognizes the importance of setting standards for ECCE provision as equally important. When properly set and applied, standards act as a yardstick for both the government and all the providers upon which performance is judged. In the absence of widely acceptable and applied standards, three things may take place: first, the market forces may determine standards and thus standards may develop in a *de facto* manner. The danger with this is that those standards chosen by the consumers may be too high and therefore may leave some schools at a disadvantage; as they may be too costly for them to provide services with such standards (Farrell and Saloner, 1998). On the other hand such standards may be too low resulting in wide spread sub-standard provision. Second, faced with no guidance, providers with no umbrella organization to provide standards may improvise their own methods as standards or may enter into a coalition with other schools in order to develop agreed standards. This may also result in using sub-standard guidelines and hence poor provision. Lastly, some providers may be forced to approach primary schools for guidance on what should be taught in their settings. This in itself, though helpful in the short run, may be risky, as exposing children of pre-school age to a primary school curriculum may be counterproductive and in fact damaging. This also means that children are pushed as rapidly as possible through childhood, a quickening pace that may mean that childhood could altogether be missed. This is because the early years are years that must be preserved for children's optimal development (Zigler, 1987; Elkind, 1981). Emphasis at this stage therefore, should be put on teaching overall emotional, social and psychological development, rather than reading, writing and numbers.

Given the importance of ECCE to children's overall learning and development, it becomes even more imperative to have national standards in place in order to ensure quality for all children regardless of their gender as well as their socio-economic backgrounds. Better standards are standards that are developed based on the needs of children, as well as being sufficiently clear and attainable. With the issue of attainability, unattainable standards may lead to excessive regulation, unnecessary constraints and confusion. Thus in order to ensure quality, standards must develop in a *de jure* manner. The advantage with *de jure* developed

standards is that they are developed by a regulatory body with powers to enforce them. As a result they act as a yardstick for both the government and all providers for measuring how well pre-schools are performing, and may lead to increased quality in provision.

International Community's view of the enabling factors for quality determinants at the global level

Enabling factors at the international level are also seen as important. The international community recognizes that one of the major factors that affect efforts to improve quality and accessibility in ECCE provision is funding. Accordingly, the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) affirms that 'no country seriously committed to education for all should be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources' (p.3). Thus, in addition to urging governments to make concrete financial commitment (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000), the international community holds itself responsible for alleviating any financial constraints by adopting measures that will augment the national budgets or to relieve heavy debt burdens (World Declaration on Education For All, 1990). In Uganda, such measures have included an increase in external finance; ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance; facilitating more effective donor co-ordination; strengthening sector-wide approaches; providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000). External funding has mainly been in the form of grants and loans as budget or project support. Through budget support, external finance has been extended to the government through the Ministry Of Finance (Bitamazire, 2005). Project support has been in the form of direct support to particular projects, with the funding body assuming full control of the project from its inception to completion without channeling money through the Ministry of Finance.

International bodies that have been involved in providing both budgetary and project support include the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, Christian Children's Fund, The Aga Khan Foundation (EFA Uganda Assessment Report 2000), the Norwegian Education Trust Fund, CIDA, and the Consultative group on ECCD (ECDVU, 2005). What should be noted however is that such donor funding also covers areas such as nutrition, immunization, as well as adolescents, and hence it is not easy to isolate investment earmarked for Early Child Education (EFA Uganda Assessment Report, 2000).

In addition to providing direct funding, the international community has also allocated money aimed at improving the capacity of ECCE personnel both at the regional and the national level. This has mainly been through funding for further studies through the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU) in Victoria Canada. The mission of this University is to build capacity through the promotion of regional Early Childhood Development network by supporting in-country development through utilization of computer information technology, identifying indigenous education, stimulating local solution, and accessing international expertise (ECDVU, 2005).

Studies are a three-year long-distance Masters course, and participants study through the Internet, CD Rom and video conferencing. This is combined with semi-annual seminars that are held in different parts of Africa. By making participants study within their respective countries, it helps them to apply what they are learning to their daily work. Also, by organizing semi-annual seminars, participants are given the opportunity to interact with Early Childhood professionals from various regions of the continent. Participants in the ECDVU are nominated by Early Childhood Development country committees basing on their ability to achieve inter-sectoral, multi-organizational representation, and evidence of individual commitment to child well-being and broader social development within the country. By participating in the training, trainees accept responsibility for promoting ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) capacity within their country, their region and internationally (ECDVU, 2005). Each ECCD participant therefore, supports an inter-sectoral network of ECCD advocates and practitioners in his or her country. This 'community of learners' benefits directly from the participant's learning and in turn extending the experience further into the regions of the country (ECDVU, 2005).

In Uganda, the first participants in the Early Childhood Development Virtual University have greatly contributed towards improving the quality of ECCD services. The participants include: Anne Gamurorwa (Communications specialist) Monica Muheirwe (Tutor and coordinator ECCE section at the institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo), Hilda Nankunda (Sponsor Donor Ministry manager at Compassion international), and Lydia Nyesigomwe (Director, Action for Children). Their contribution has mainly been in terms of Capacity building among tutors and pre-school teachers, promotion of community support and helping community groups reach their goals such as an innovative program to provide childcare for

children orphaned by the loss of their parents from HIV/AIDS, promotion of understanding the importance of ECCD, documentation and integration of local cultural practices in ECCE, and promotion of the use of information technology to strengthen the ECCD network in Uganda (ECDUV, 2005).

In addition to providing funding, the international community has contributed to improving quality and accessibility in ECCE provision by adopting a 'Rights' based approach. This has been through international agreements and treaties, which ultimately become international laws. Since the late 1940s, such approaches have been interwoven in different significant conferences and declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the World Summit for Children (1990); the World Declaration on Education for All (1990); the World Conference on Human Rights (1993); and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000). By attending and signing conferences and treaties such as these, all the countries involved are agreeing upon definitions of what is right and appropriate, and hence taking it upon themselves to put what has been agreed upon into practice, under the watchful eye of all the signatories. As a signatory for example, Uganda has since the early 1990s launched a succession of important constitutional, legislative and political initiatives embodying principles and ideas drawn from several United Nations conventions and other international treaties. These have included: the Poverty Eradication Plan (1991); Uganda National Action Plan for children (UNPAC, 1992); the Constitution of Uganda (1992); the White Paper on Education (1992); the Constitution of Uganda (1995); the Children Statute (1996); the Education Policy (1996); and the National Gender Policy (1997) (Muheirwe *et.al*, 2002), in an attempt to ensure that all her children gain access to quality ECCE programs.

Another way that the international community has contributed has been the provision of scientific knowledge (Watson, 1994) in the field of ECCE. This has been mainly through making international findings available for local use or by providing support for research for local studies (Myers, 1997). The word science has its origin in the Latin verb '*scire*' meaning to 'know' (Yogesh, 1994). Although one can know through authority, tenacity, intuition, and faith, scientific knowledge is distinct in that its bedrock is empirical testability (Hunt, 1991). And because knowledge has been accumulated over time, that is, contributions to such knowledge are made from different avenues and information is disseminated and made accessible among all strata (including people that may have been cut off in the past), such

knowledge becomes a capacity for action. Thus, it gives individuals or groups of people a platform to stress not merely one-sided but multi-faceted causes for action. In general, knowledge as a capacity for action enables one to set something into motion. Contribution of scientific knowledge as a precursor for action has been evident in Uganda in recent years, as it has been made available to different groups of people. As a result, this has translated into the formation of a number of Civil Society Organizations as well as Non Governmental Organizations leading to the creation of a body of advocacy on the issues pertaining to ECCE. Such advocacy in the 1990s for example, led to the establishment of an Early Childhood Development task force, with the aim of documenting the situation of Early Childhood Development in Uganda. A report entitled 'Eight is too late' was as a result produced and recommendations made for an urgent need to improve Early Childhood Education and Development in Uganda (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002).

The importance of such scientific knowledge has not so much been from the fact that it is at times treated as if it is objective (or essentially uncontested), but it has constituted an incremental capacity for social action (Stehr, 1994) or an increase in the knowledge of the importance of the early years. In its ability and legitimacy to generate novel capacities of action in the field of the early years, science is virtually without a competitor in modern (Stehr, 1994) Uganda.

Lastly, the international community has been at the forefront of providing expert/technical knowledge (Watson, 1994) in the field of ECCE. Technical Assistance is not a grant, but rather it is a customer-designed package of professionals who are selected depending on their expertise, in order to help the recipient country respond to key organizational challenges. In a country like Uganda where there is scarcity of specialists in this area, technical assistance (also known as gap filling) has been especially vital in a number of important way: Firstly Technical Advisors have helped in the facilitation of resource flow by participating in the preparation of feasibility studies, project proposals, presentations for meetings with donors, evaluation, planning, and implementation of projects. The quality of documents prepared for facilitation of resource flow by Technical Experts, is also said to be of higher quality and the time taken to prepare them shorter, than if documents were prepared by local (Godfrey, *et al.*, 2000) Ugandans. Secondly, Technical Assistance has helped in ensuring that both organizational and stated outcomes are reached in the designated time frame. This as a result has encouraged more donors to invest more and more in the field. Lastly, although this may

be intentional or an ‘overflow’, Technical Assistance has not only helped in filling gaps in the field of ECCE, but it has also helped in developing individual capacity. This is because as a recipient of this assistance, Uganda has been expected to make a counterpart (s) available to work with the experts or consultants designated to a project. Technical advisors have often given counterparts considerable responsibility in the running of the projects. As a result, a high proportion of counterparts have acquired managerial as well as other professional skills (Godfrey *et al.*, 2000) hence boosting capacity building in the field of ECCE that is much needed in Uganda.

One would wonder why given the multitude of needs faced by developing countries, developed countries have in recent years emphasized the need for quality and accessible education including ECCE. The next Chapter looks at the reasons why such emphasis has been made, by focusing on the importance of ECCE to an individual child and the nation as a whole.

PART TWO

Reasons for the concern by the International Community about the issues of quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision

Introduction

In the previous section, I have discussed what the international community defines as the constituents of quality in an early childhood setting. We have seen that such quality is primarily defined by two highly related components: process quality, which captures the experiences children have with adults and their exposure to materials and activities; and structural quality, which captures the aspects of the childcare program environment such as teacher/child ratio that are often regulated by the government. The reason for putting emphasis on the presence of such qualities has been as a result of findings from research over the years in Early Childhood Development. Such research has documented that children’s early experiences provide a foundation upon which later learning and development depends. This is because children are helped to develop skills, concepts and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. Thus, ECCE is crucial for the acquisition of skills in reading,

writing, problem-solving, numeracy concepts, health and well-being, competence and coping abilities (Doherty, 1999), and emotional intelligence (Bassok *et al.*, 2004) such as confidence, curiosity, purposefulness, self control, cooperativeness and capacity to learn. What children experience during the early years in life therefore, is likely to last a life-time.

The importance of the early years

For many decades there was the nature versus nurture debate on the issue of brain development in children. Such debate had been based on the argument that the major factors that influenced optimal brain development were primarily genetically driven regardless of experiences. However in recent years, it has widely been acknowledged that although genetics are important, early experience and the environment play a significant role in optimal brain development (NAEYC, 2007; Mustard, 2007). Research indicates that by the time the baby is born, it has virtually all the cells (neurons) it will ever have. However, they are not connected together the way they are in an adult brain. During the early years, there is a rapid process of cell-to-cell connection during which others are reinforced while others die away. This connectedness is dependent on the environment, which not only affects the number of brain cells and the number of connections, but also the way in which they are 'wired'. This indicates that the brain grows not by the addition of new cells but rather by generating new connections among the cells that were present at birth (ECCD Briefs, 1999). In other words, the environment helps to organise and reorganise the brain, thereby refining the way it functions. Thus, although experiences may alter behaviour in adults, in children, it is experience that forms their mind and brain (Perry et al., 1996). Research conducted in this area has also indicated that optimal brain development is associated with good health, good behaviour and development of literacy. In a study carried out in Sweden for example, it was found that the risk of cardio vascular problems for adults who had been in very adverse child circumstances in comparison to those who were in quality conditions was 7:1, while the ratio for mental conditions such as depression was 10:1 (Mustard, 2007). Such evidence reinforces the agency for children to participate in quality ECCE programs that expose them to a variety of different experiences and activities such as music, drama, painting, dancing, and creative writing. This is because it is at this age when the brain is most open and receptive (Hotz, 2000). This in turn helps to produce children and later adults who are intellectually flexible, skilled in problem-solving, emotionally resilient and well able to interact with others (Young, 2007).

Because of the varied and rich experiences that children are exposed to in ECCE programs, they are helped to access formal schooling when they are ready. 'Readiness' is defined as children's preparedness to learn what schools expect or want them to learn (Edwards 1999). The issue of 'school readiness' has attracted a lot of attention from a range of people including parents, teachers, researchers, as well as policy makers. This has been due to the realisation that those children who are not well prepared with skills necessary for success in school, continue to lag behind their peers throughout their years in school (Early Childhood Education task force, 2005). Participation in ECCE enables children to acquire appropriate knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities that will help them to cope with the learning demands in primary schooling (Ngaruiya, 2006). Studies carried out in the United Kingdom in the 1990s showed that children who passed through pre-school out-performed their peers in most subject areas at the age of seven (Shorrocks *et.al.*, 1992). Also studies carried out based on children's IQ indicated that children transfer the benefits gained at pre-primary level on entering primary schooling (Barnett 1995). Various studies carried out in the United States of America showed that there were long-term academic and social achievements too. Children who participated in the Caroline Abecedarian project in the United states for example, showed significant gains in education performance, cognitive development, and improved behaviour that were still evident even at the age of twenty-one (Schweinart and Weikart,1980).

What should be stressed however, is that although ECCE helps children to access primary schooling when they are ready, there is no exact profile of what a child who is 'ready' for school should know and be able to do (Lewit and Schuurmann, 1995). And as a result due to individual differences, children from the same school and class for example, might join primary schooling with differing skills and knowledge. This has led to the argument that the focus should not be on how ready children are, but rather how schools are ready for children (Shore, 1998). Being ready for children means responding to a wide diversity of children's educational needs, thereby giving all children the appropriate activities and instruction through appropriate curriculum, staffing and age consideration. Additionally, how children succeed in school will also depend on the 'match' between children's skills and teachers' expectations of such children. More children succeed when these expectations reflect knowledge of child development and early learning (NAEYC, 1998)

In addition, provision of quality ECCE is a good economic initiative (Barnett, 2004; Currie, 2001). Because children enter school when they are ready both physically and mentally, they are most likely to stay on in school, complete high school, and thereafter graduate and look for employment. Research in growth differences across countries has emphasised school attainment differences as highly related to economic growth (Hanushek, 2005). Such research confirms the highly contested notion of the quality of a country's labour force and the resultant level of economic growth. The relationship between provision of quality ECCE and economic development of a country can be explained in a number of ways:

- Firstly, the prosperity of a country's economy depends upon the competence of the workforce. These competencies are not acquired over night, but rather are developed in early years, and they depend on the quality of education that children get. In Early Childhood Care and Education, for example children are taught to be persistent in the tasks that they undertake even when they sometimes find it difficult to complete them. As a result, determination becomes part and parcel of a child's 'work' and 'life' even when they become adults. Such children are not hindered from venturing into the unknown for fear of failure. When they are adults, they become 'risk takers' as opposed to 'quitters'; they are ready to try out new innovations amidst the ever-changing technologies, which in turn improve the quality of their work. Early experiences and education therefore, significantly helps in the development of the 'highly prized' human capital, which translates into efficacy and higher productivity;
- Secondly, it is believed that the increased productivity of the educated workers may have a positive effect (increased productivity) on their co-workers (Mingat and Tan, 1985). This is because co-workers are most likely to copy the behaviour, attitudes towards work, and the style of how their colleagues approach tasks. This not only increases production, but it also saves companies money in that instead of spending such money on further training, co-workers learn both intentionally and unintentionally from each other. The money saved therefore, is invested back into businesses, thereby increasing returns and hence growth of a country's revenue as well as the size of the economy;
- Thirdly, due to high numbers of well nourished, and socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively developed people coupled with their level of education and

subsequent employment, a country is in a position to save money. This is as a result of reduced costs on criminal justice and welfare assistance (Gray and others, 1982; Irvine, 1982; Lazar and Darling, 1982; Featherstone, 1986; Powell, 1986);

- Fourthly, because children stay on and graduate, they are able to get employment. This in itself means an increase in tax revenue due to increased earnings. In The United States of America for example, the high/scope Perry Preschool Study found that of those children who had participated in the program, 29% reported monthly earnings of \$2,000 or more, which was a significant difference compared to only 7% earnings of those who did not participate (Schweinart and Weikart, 1980);
- Fifthly, although foreign investors are attracted to a particular country by such things as the actual and potential size of the market and a country's resource endowment, the availability of a trained/quality workforce plays a significant role (Gibson-smith, 2000). This is because investors need a degree of certainty that money invested will bring good returns. The availability of a good workforce lures investors to a country, as it presents the possibility of effective utilisation of resources and hence production of higher quality goods and services for the existing market both locally and internationally;
- And lastly, for employed mothers, the fact that their children are being adequately cared for gives them peace of mind thereby increasing their concentration at work and leads to fewer days off. This in itself increases productivity (Galinsky and Johnson, 1998; Bond and others, 1998).

Furthermore, quality ECCE is one way of developing and fostering societal values such as appreciation of diversity, tolerance, justice, and respect for human rights, all of which are a requirement for peace, prosperity and democracy in society (The World Conference on Education for All 1990). Thus, if a conducive environment is not provided right from childhood for appropriate societal values to be planted, nurtured and therefore take root, efforts to instil them at a later age are most likely to be unsuccessful. This is because attitudes and prejudices develop early in the socialisation process that children experience in early childhood settings. ECCE centres provide a 'rich' environment for the development of positive attitudes, because children are taken from their immediate families and are exposed

to other children and adults from different upbringings, culture, language, interests and colour.

Also, the nurturing that children experience in an atmosphere of compassion and mutual respect in the early years, helps to ‘create’ responsible citizens who take on democratic values (University of Texas, School of Urban and Public Affairs, 2001). Longitudinal studies in this area have shown that the benefits that children reap from attending quality ECCE are in fact long lasting. When followed up to the age of twenty-seven years for example, of those who had participated in the High/scope Perry pre-school project in the United States of America as children, only 7% of the participants were arrested for different kinds of crime, as compared to 35% of those young adults of the same age who were non-participants. Also at the same age, the same percentage (only 7%), were ever arrested for dealing in drugs as compared to 25% of the non-participants ([Schweinhart, et al.](#), 1993).

In addition, quality ECCE benefits parents and siblings. As the prime educators of their children, parents want the best for them. Once parents are sure of the type of care their children are getting, they are encouraged to go out and look for employment, go for further studies, or have time for their other children (especially in single parent families). Also, with the increase in the number of teenage mothers (most of them without the knowledge of parenting and child development), ECCE programs help such parents to meet the changing developmental needs of their children. In addition, countries which have policies that encourage parents to be actively involved in ECCE programs especially by helping out in classroom activities, help parents to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of child development. In Scotland for example, parents are encouraged to participate in classroom activities such as baking, story reading, and all other activities that take place in the nursery school. One would assume that while such parents are in the classroom, they learn beyond what they are assigned to do. By watching the teachers, they learn how the teachers approach different tasks with the children and how teachers encourage positive behaviour or discourage bad behaviour. This helps parents to learn and adopt ideas, activities and approaches for the betterment of their interaction with their children at home. This in itself helps to create a desirable continuum of learning between the nursery school and the home. It is argued that by doing so, parents are not only helping their children who attend ECCE programs, but siblings too benefit, as parents are most likely to use the same approach. Neidell and Waldfogel (2006) termed this as a ‘spill over effect’, in that families, especially those with

merger income who can only afford to educate a limited number of children, have their other young children benefit at a very low cost.

And lastly, provision of ECCE helps in the reduction of social inequality. This is because it aids in the prevention of developmental delays such as language development, visual and motor development, as well as gross motor development especially in children from poor backgrounds (Seguel *et.al.*, 1992). A good example is the Head Start program in the United States of America which was a comprehensive early intervention for low-income pre-school children and their families. Those who participated showed positive results in all domains of development (Schweinart and Weikart, 1980). ECCE is therefore a means of bringing about social equality thereby attempting to put children on equal footing prior to starting primary schooling, regardless of the different conditions in life such as poverty, neglect and ignorance.

Summary

Research findings have shown the overwhelming importance of ECCE to children's learning and development. Such findings have as a result played a major role in putting ECCE on to the international policy agenda. This has been mainly as a result of the importance that is attached to education as a prerequisite for any country's development. This correlation has therefore been the driving force to the international community's involvement in improving both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. Such efforts however, have been met by criticisms from researchers, educators, as well as economists. The next section therefore looks at these criticisms in detail.

PART THREE

Critics of the International Community's involvement in the improvement of quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision

Introduction

Much as the international community has been at the forefront of 'improving' both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision by doing several things such as providing the definition to what quality entails, increasing funding, and provision of both scientific experts and

knowledge in the field of ECCE, their involvement has been interpreted by some as in fact a hindrance. A number of grounds have been put forward to justify such criticisms.

Basis for criticisms

The international community has been seen by many as a community that is mainly influenced by developed countries' ideologies as far as ECCE is concerned. Such criticisms have been directed at issues like their use of 'scientifically borrowed models', targeted intervention, and their use of NGOs as opposed to governments in their various long as well as short term ECCE projects. Also, some have viewed the intervention as one not aimed at the betterment of a developing country like Uganda, but the rationale for intervention being economic benefits to the developed countries. While others suggest that such intervention is in fact not wholly targeted at helping Ugandan children to access quality ECCE but rather minimum improvement in quality and accessibility. The next section looks at such criticisms in detail.

With the issue of the use of 'scientifically borrowed models', it has been argued that the World Bank and all other donor agencies justify their actions of intervening in ECCE provision as impeccably informed by science. Yet these 'scientifically proven' facts relate particularly to Anglo-American models of child development. Such facts are viewed as the way forward to improving both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda in particular and the developing world in general, leading to the adoption of global/generic standards and skills. This however, has been seen as sometimes resulting in greater uniformity of education (Ohanian, 1999) and insufficient attention to local aims relating to social change and human development (UNESCO, 2005). The example given is the World Bank's published book, a 'definitive book' for early childhood programming (Evans *et.al.*, 2000) used as a guiding principle to applying such imported models. The handbook drew on earlier similar guidelines produced by UNICEF and other agencies (Penn, 2002).

The overriding assumption at the heart of the handbook was Developmentally Appropriate Practices (a term that was coined in the United States of America by the National Association of the Education of Young Children-NAEYC). The book listed varying ages and stages children go through as well as the broad familial contexts in which learning takes place. It perpetuated the stereotype of experiences subdivided into the physical, intellectual, emotional and social. It enumerated the kinds of practices that adults should adopt in order to enable

children to pass through these stages successfully. These stages and the accompanying practices are assumed to be similar everywhere, and that 'Culture' produces only minor variations. These precepts of understanding and practice based on ECCE provision in developed countries like the U.S.A are seen as perfectly legitimate for the developing countries (Penn, 2002). These are justified by claims made by some leading educators in America, that 'children are pretty (much) the same everywhere ...' (Weikart, 1998). Such claims are often justified by research findings from a variety of fields: developmental psychology, neuroscience and genetics (Penn, 2002). Thus to the World Bank, and to other donor agencies, children are assumed to pass through the same stages of development irrespective of community and nation.

The World Bank and donor agencies therefore deny the fact that children's development is a 'contingent (and) conditional process' (Richards, 1998), in which the environmental, genetic and biological factors, diversity of cultures, and individual experiences of children (Penn, 2002), play a significant part in their overall optimal development. And thus, efforts to improve both the quality and accessibility in ECCE cannot be seen as neutral, culture free and inevitable. This is because the concepts of early childhood programs differ from country to country from the 'properly defined interventions' of donor agencies. And as a result, interventions have in most cases led to exacerbation of the already poor quality and accessibility in provision. But such failure has been interpreted as a failure of application rather than a failure of conception or narrowness of understanding (Penn, 2002).

Secondly, the approach by donor agencies to ECCE is what could be termed as 'short-sighted targeted provision' (Penn, 2002). It is argued that many donor agencies come to the field of ECCE with the assumption that carefully targeted intervention to vulnerable communities can make a difference. This argument is mainly borrowed from the USA, which follows a liberal economic policy that sees little need for state intervention except for a targeted minority of the very poorest. Even these small-targeted interventions are contracted out to profit and non-profit providers, which are then assessed as specific, isolated and time-limited experiments. The major aim of such interventions is to reduce poverty in targeted population, usually poor black populations (Penn, 2002). 'Targeted' intervention therefore, means working at micro-level and making small-scale changes. But such an approach works in developed countries, which have well-established ECCE provision and are only working towards filling gaps in such provision. And because the same model is what is being adopted in the developing world

including Uganda, this has meant that the achievement of both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision is still far from reality. Thus given the fact that ECCE is still quite a new phenomenon in the country, the approach has only served to exacerbate the existing ‘undesired’ pattern of provision.

Thirdly, it has been argued that Donor agencies in their ‘quest’ to provide ‘quality and accessibility’ in ECCE services, often by-pass national governments (Fawzia, 2005). Thus, they prefer to work closely with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) through funding and information sharing. Such actions view governments as generally incapable and inefficient in the funding and delivery of ECCE services. And because the government is not actively involved, this makes it difficult for it to monitor the quality and coverage of such services.

Fourthly, the rationale for intervention has generally been viewed as economic. When comparing its funding to the different sectors for example, the World Bank releases big sums of money through loans to long-term projects compared to money released to non-lending short term activities such as ECCE projects (Penn, 2002; World Bank 2007a; World Bank, 2007b), conferences and workshops. And because funding for the ECCE sub-sector is short term, projects in most cases end before they even take off. Meanwhile, the government is put in a position to make sure that loans are paid. The result is increased debt burden and the hefty debt servicing charges. For example, for every dollar borrowed in aid, \$1.30 to \$2 flow back to lenders in debt servicing (Lorentz, 2007). East African countries alone have spent \$2000 million annually (IRIN, 2006). And because of the low level of GDP per capita of developing countries (which is made worse by Structural Adjustment policies), this makes national savings extremely difficult, thus reducing the ability of governments to invest especially in ECCE

And lastly, it has been argued that although international donors participate in ECCE provision, their aim seems to be provision of ‘minimum’ quality. In their study of the effect of targeted investment in Brazil, Rossetti-Ferreira *et al.*, (2000) and Rosemberg (2000) found that investment by donor agencies promoted lower standards of care for poor children than those acceptable for wealthy families. As a result, intervention has not resulted in the provision of ‘model’ ECCE centres that could be looked up to and copied by indigenous, locally funded providers.

Summary

This chapter has shown that the goal of achieving EFA is not a new phenomenon, as it has been on the international agenda since the late 1940s. But what is different from the initiatives of the 1940s and those of the early 1990s, has been the focus on ECCE as part of basic education and the importance of quality rather than quantity in provision. It is undeniable that overwhelming research findings on the importance of ECCE to children's overall learning and development have been a precursor to the increased international advocacy for both quality and accessibility in ECCE. This is because many of the benefits of quality ECCE profit communities, societies, and countries at large. Therefore, what is done or not done for children in their early years when their intellectual potential, personality and social behaviour are being developed, determines not only their own future, but quite significantly the future of a country.

Efforts by the international community though helpful, have not been without critics. But amidst the criticisms however, the international community has helped to do four things:

- It has helped to emphasize the overwhelming importance of quality and accessible ECCE to both individual children and governments;
- It has helped to emphasize the desirable quality indicators in ECCE provision at the classroom level;
- It has helped to emphasize the enabling factors at the school and country levels that have to be put into place if both quality and accessibility are to be realized, as well as the role it (the international community) has to play in all this;
- It has helped to hold governments accountable in ensuring that their commitment to expanding and improving comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education is put into practice.

As a result of such international 'pressure', countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, have adopted various steps to ensure that their 'pledge' made at Jomtien in 1990 and later re-affirmed at Dakar in 2000 is 'honoured'. In Zimbabwe for example, primary schools are now required to have at least one class that caters for 4-5 year olds, in order to prepare them for grade one. This program also known as 'grade zero' (Johwa, 2005) is part of the government's ECCE initiative. While in Ghana, following the Accra Declaration of 1993, all relevant government departments, agencies, Non Governmental Organisations, individuals and other partners in ECCE, were urged to collectively broaden the scope and vision of

Ghana's children. The government took this further by making a policy decision to offer free and compulsory Early Childhood Education (Wade, 2001; Zaney, 2005). But although Uganda has not gone as far as Zimbabwe and Ghana, various initiatives have been taken. These are discussed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Early Childhood Care and Education provision in Uganda today

PART ONE

Uganda's response to both Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) conferences

Introduction

The government of Uganda recognizes basic education as both a human right and an important investment in the future productivity of the country (Keene-Mugerwa, 2006; Lusk-Stover, 2006). This recognition is reflected in numerous government documents, as well as continued participation by the government in international conferences and declarations. The 1995 constitution of Uganda for example, reflects Uganda's commitment to ensuring that all children regardless of their sex, race, color, ethnic origin, tribe, creed, religion, socio-economic standing, as well as political opinion, enjoy the right to education. Article XVIII (I) of the constitution states that:

The state shall take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunities to attain the highest educational standards possible (The Constitution of Uganda, 1995)

Also, as an active participant in international conferences and declarations, Uganda was one of the signatories to the 1990 Jomtien conference in Thailand, whose focus was on access to quality basic Education For All, and the 2000 Dakar Framework For Action, which reaffirmed the earlier commitments made at Jomtien (1990); of achieving the six goals now commonly known as Education For All (EFA) goals.

In Uganda, there are a variety of terms and/or provisions that are used to describe ECCE programs for children prior to entering primary school. These include Crèche, nursery school, kindergarten and pre-primary (The Government Whitepaper, 1992; Education Standards Agency and The Ministry of Education report on Teacher Education Institutions, 2006). All these refer to non-formal centre-based programs for children aged three to six years. Such

programs take a variety of forms; they can be offered individually or for groups of children in centres, purpose built buildings, churches, communities or in private homes.

The aim of pre-primary education provision includes:

- To develop capabilities and healthy physical growth of the child through play activities;
- To help the child develop good social habits as an individual and as a member of society;
- To develop moral values in the child;
- To enrich the child's experience by developing imagination, self-reliance and thinking power;
- To help the child to appreciate his/her cultural backgrounds and customs;
- To develop language and communication skills in the mother tongue (Government White paper, 1992).

The various steps that Uganda has adopted to improve quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision

In order to foster and achieve the first of the six goals of Education For All (providing quality and accessible Early Childhood Care and Education) Uganda has taken numerous measures at the national level (Hartwell, *et al.*, 2003). In addition to the 1995 constitution mentioned earlier, the government has launched successive important legislative and policy initiatives, as well as a number of sectoral policies in relation to the ongoing effort. These include the 1992 White Paper on Education; the 1996 education policy which aimed at increasing accessibility, and relevance, with the special focus on universalization; the gender policy of 1997 which provided guidance and direction to all programs and all stakeholders to consciously streamline gender issues in their respective activities including child related ones; and the 2000 education bill (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002). All of these aim at increasing quality, accessibility, and relevance of ECCE provision.

In addition, the government of Uganda in the year 2000 created the Department of Pre-primary and Primary Education within the Ministry of Education and Sports. The department holds the sole responsibility of strengthening management and service delivery in the ECCE sector by controlling, licensing, registering, inspecting and supervising the Early Childhood Care and Education sector. The creation of the Department of Pre-primary and Primary

Education is a clear indication that Uganda sees children as a national priority, and hence the need to ensure that they are brought up and educated in conditions that are conducive for their well-being, and hence achieve optimal development.

The establishment of the National Council for Children (NCC) is another indication of the government's increasing commitment. The NCC monitors, coordinates and evaluates all children's programs in the country. It serves as a secretariat for the Early Childhood Development Technical Forum, which convenes bi-monthly to deliberate on issues of children aged up to eight years. Its main role is to ensure that children's problems and needs are considered fully during both budgetary and policy formulation exercises (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002).

Government budgetary allocations for this sector have increased in recent years. Although funding does not go directly to pre-schools, it caters for paying inspectors, tutors, and all the personnel in the Department of Pre-primary and Primary Education. Also ECCE personnel are increasingly being sponsored both by the government and international organizations to attend workshops and conferences on ECCE. For example, in 1999, a networking workshop was held in Kampala for all the stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and Sports, and it was attended by personnel from the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), National Council for Children (NCC), as well as key NGOs and Donors (Education for All Country Assessment Report, 2000).

Since government funding in the ECCE sub-sector is still limited, the government of Uganda encourages participation of different groups at different levels in order to ensure funding of the sector. Article XVIII (III) of the Constitution states 'individuals, religious bodies, and other non-governmental organizations shall be free to found and operate educational institutions...' As a result, there has been increased participation by different stakeholders at all levels including the local (parents and individuals) and national (Non Governmental Organizations). At the local level, parents participate by mainly paying teacher salaries. Also there has been a big increase in the number of ECCE centres as a result of individuals investing in this sector. At the national level, international funding bodies have mainly provided grants and loans in the form of budget or project support. In addition to funding,

international organizations provide international training opportunities to enhance the capacity of personnel, as well as engaging in research.

Good quality initial and in-service teacher training is also seen as paramount in achieving quality ECCE provision. Unlike many years ago when it was assumed that any one could teach in the early years regardless of their level of education, the government has become actively involved in an attempt to ensure that those who teach in the sector are adequately qualified. As a result, the government in recent years has assumed increased control and has taken on the responsibility over the early childhood teacher training centers in terms of curriculum and management restructuring, increased budgetary allocations (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2004), accreditation, as well as increased entry points. Those who would like to join the early years must have a minimum of a senior four certificate. Because of the increased involvement by the government, there has been a major improvement in the number of quality pre-school teachers nationally. Today, a substantial number of teachers in the sector have gone through some form of training.

There has also been an increase in the number of colleges training early childhood teachers. Such training colleges offer varying courses both in duration and training methods, depending on the philosophies as well as the availability of resources. Training centers include: YMCA, YWCA, Sanyu Babies Home, Montessori in Entebbe, Nile Vocational Institute in Jinja, Human Resource Development in Hoima, Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), Nangabo, and Madrasa. Other than ITEK, the rest are private initiatives (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). Courses offered range from certificates to degree programs. As well as training tutors, the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo trains ECCE teachers at certificate level, and those teachers who are certificate holders and would wish to upgrade to a diploma level (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002).

All training institutions have to be accredited by the government, and those that are not accredited are required to affiliate with the accredited institutions. ITEK is the accredited training college in the country, while those affiliated to ITEK include: Nile Vocational Institute in Jinja and Sanyu Training school. Those that are in the process of being affiliated to ITEK include Nangabo self-help project, Montessori Educational Center in Entebbe, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) training institutes (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002). The main overall goal of teacher training

is to equip teachers with knowledge and skills that are relevant to both their professional and personal development. Teachers are taught how to provide rich and stimulating experiences for children. Once they qualify and gain employment, their salaries vary considerably, earning on average Uganda Shillings 10,000 (approximately \$3 per month) (EFA Assessment Report, 2002). In-service teacher training is mainly offered by ITEK (Vantage Communications (U) Limited, 2002) alongside private initiatives.

In addition, although the Government of Uganda is not directly involved in establishing pre-school centers, it has increasingly encouraged the private sector to do so. One of the ways that the government has encouraged private investment has been through the education taxation policy. Under the value added tax statute of 1996, education services are treated as an exempt supply. This means that they are not subject to VAT. Education materials are zero rated, that is, investors in the education sector can claim for a refund from the government of any VAT that they pay on inputs (items purchased as education materials). Except from the above, the education sector is subject to the same treatment as other sectors under the tax laws that affect companies and business organizations in Uganda (Vantage Communications (U) Limited, 2002). Private investors have included NGOs (churches, mosques and others), individuals, and both international and bilateral organizations (UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation). They offer services such as opening up premises, teacher and manager pre and in-service training, curriculum and teaching material development, financial support, opening up teacher resource centres, engagement in research, and providing opportunities for international training opportunities. Such concerted efforts have led to great improvements in both the quality of the services offered and the number of children that access such services. For example, the number of children who were enrolled in pre-primary schools increased from 52,079 in 1998 to 63,563 in 2000 (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000).

Also, as a way of ensuring quality in provision, all existing and new providers are required by law to be registered by the Ministry of Education and Sports. This allows them to obtain a license that permits them to operate. The Ministry of Education and Sports has given guidelines for registration of centers. The existing approved procedures and regulations for licensing and registration of school cover thirteen areas to which each provider must adhere. They include:

- The intending proprietor makes known his/her intentions to start a school to the Commissioner of Education and seeks his/her permission to do so in writing;

- The Commissioner for Education writes back acknowledging receipt and granting or disallowing permission;
- The proprietor receives application forms for license from the District Education Officer (DEO);
- The District Inspector of Schools and the District Health Inspector inspect the intended school and attain detailed report;
- The District Education Officer forwards three copies of the application forms to the Commissioner for Education in the Ministry of Education and Sports;
- The Commissioner for Education, basing on either reports and recommendations from the district or a report following a physical inspection by the central inspectorate recommends to the Commissioner for Education who approves or rejects the application for license;
- The Commissioner for Education approves and awards a license to last one year, copied to the Commissioner for Education (inspectorate), DEO, District Inspector of Schools (DIS) and the head teacher;
- About one month or two to the expiry of the one year license, the proprietor collects forms for registration providing details showing that the school is now fully established and meets the minimum requirements;
- The DIS re-inspects the school for registration;
- The DEO recommends to the Commissioner for Education (inspectorate) the school for registration;
- The Commissioner for Education using information and documents attached to the application forms, or a report based on physical inspection of the schools by the central inspectorate, may reject the application and give reasons for doing so to the proprietor, or recommend to the Commissioner for Education the award of a registration and classification number;
- All licenses and registration certificates are entered in the registers kept by the Commissioner for Education. Applications for license will be dealt with between June-December preceding the year of operation;
- A school may be de-licensed or de-registered in cases of non-compliance with the regulations governing the operations of private schools in accordance with the Education Act (1970) by the Commissioner for Education (Vantage Communications (U) Limited, 2002.

In addition to the above regulation procedures, all investors intending to set up educational institutions are required by the Ministry of Education and Sports, to fill in a copy of an assessment form (See Appendix Three).

Once a school has been registered, it is subject to inspection. The Ugandan government sees school inspection as a way of measuring, controlling, as well as ensuring quality in ECCE provision. Such control is linked to the curricular objectives of promoting all round optimal development of children in the early years. The school inspectorate, an arm of the Ministry of Education, was the one responsible for quality control. This was reformed and restructured, and hence the formation of the Education Standards Agency (ESA) in July 2001 (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2004). ESA is attached to the Ministry of Education and Sports and pre-school is treated as part of the wider primary remit in the inspection process (Hartwell *et al.*, 2003). It is the responsibility of ESA in collaboration with the de-centralized bodies responsible for education such as District Inspectors, to inspect and assess the quality of teaching and learning in pre-schools. Inspectors are answerable to and report to the District Education Officer and the District Chief Administrative Officer.

The key function of ESA is to ensure that schools and teachers comply with government regulations and standards, and also to ensure that schools adhere to the curriculum guidelines. Inspection thus helps to determine whether provision meets the developmental and educational standards set by the government. It also assists providers attain the quality-established standards by identifying areas where improvements are required and by suggesting approaches, which providers could take to achieve the improvements needed.

There are two main forms/instruments used to collect quality assurance data from schools: Teaching and Learning Inspection Instrument (TLII) and Management Inspection Instrument (MII). These two inspection forms provide methods of reporting, recording and observation, as well as criteria for which judgement and grading are made. The TLII form involves evaluation of the level of quality indicators such as classroom learning environment and resource provision, teacher qualifications, curriculum management, evidence of daily (routine) and weekly planning agenda, availability of learning materials, equipment and activities, and the quality of teaching and learning. The MII form on the other hand, reflects assessment of school's general operation and administration, infrastructure, health and safety standards-facilities (indoors and outdoors), adequate sanitation and hygiene, and head

teacher's level of education. Other key information included on the TLII and the MII forms include school identification, date of visit, inspectors who visited the school, and the main comments/ recommendations given to schools at the end of the visit.

The criteria for judgement are explicit, and they provide an important source of example of evidence of good practice for a wider dissemination in schools and through teacher training. Schools are rated as *very good, good, poor and unsatisfactory*. In principle, each pre-school should have a full inspection or audit from the Ministry of Education and Sports at least once every two years, lasting up to one week. Considerable documentation has to be prepared for this inspection, and a full written evaluation is provided. In the case of schools that cause concern, they are visited more often and on an ad hoc basis, in order to determine whether the identified problem (s) had been addressed. If breaches continue, the provider may be obliged to close or scale down the operations. ESA is a significant contributor to monitoring and development of quality ECCE in Uganda. Inspectors are also used as important sources of advice in the design of curriculum change and development.

The government of Uganda views the active involvement of parents in their children's education, as well as the community, as vital in ensuring quality provision. The law in Uganda adequately endows parents with the responsibility for their children. Article 31 (4) of the Uganda constitution (1995) makes it clear that it is the right and duty of parents to care for and bring up their children. Also, both the 1996 and the 2000 children statutes emphasize the responsibility of parents towards their children. For example, it is stated in Article 7 of the 1996 children's statute that 'every parent shall have the responsibility for his/her children'. These laws therefore specify and acknowledge that parents are the prime duty holders in promoting their child's welfare. As a result, parents are active participants in early childhood provision. Their participation involves giving of money in terms of schools fees, as well as contribution of learning and play materials. Schools also hold open days so that parents visit their children's schools and classrooms (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000) and see how their children are performing. At the community level, all Local Councils (LCs) are responsible for the well-being of children within their jurisdiction. In addition to the use of the media, it is the community's responsibility to raise awareness and sensitization (Muheirwe, 2004) on issues concerning ECCE. This helps to build provision on the strength of the community such as the positive aspect of culture.

Furthermore, although the official language of Uganda is English the government recognizes the role of using children's native languages in pre-schools to ensure quality provision (Constitution of Uganda, 1995). Uganda has not only been a signatory to many international United Nations declarations, resolutions and conventions, but it has also been a signatory to many Africa charters, declarations and conferences that have highlighted the issue of mother tongue in education. These have included the Cultural Charter for Africa articulated by the OAU, and the Asmara Declaration of 2000. The Asmara Declaration on Africa Languages and Literatures of January 2000 states among other things that:

- All African children have the inalienable right to attend school and that every effort should be made to develop African languages at all levels of education;
- The effective and rapid development of science and technology in Africa depends on the use of African languages;
- African languages are vital for the development of democracy based on equality and social justice;
- African languages are essential for the decolonization of African minds and for the African renaissance (Asmara Declaration, 2000).

With the above in mind, the government of Uganda made it law that the language of instruction up to lower primary (primary one to primary three) should be the child's mother tongue. All schools are therefore expected to adhere to this law although it sometimes proves practically impossible especially in urban areas due to the ethnic mix of children (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000).

With the issue of curriculum, the government of Uganda sees an appropriate ECCE curriculum as essential to achieving quality provision. By law, the Ministry of Education and Sports is responsible for setting the framework for the curriculum, but it is the responsibility of the NCDC to ensure that the curriculum is successfully developed and hence circulated. With specialists in the area of ECCE, a new curriculum was developed and distributed in 2005. The new curriculum guidelines cover four elements and they include cognitive development; language development; personal, emotional and social development; as well as creative and aesthetic development. In addition to developing the curriculum, it is also the responsibility of the NCDC to monitor the performance of the curriculum (Vantage Communications (U) Limited, 2002). Regarding the teaching methods to be employed, the

government recognizes the indispensable importance of a child-centred and active approach to learning, as opposed to teacher-led learning.

Summary

The available literature provides evidence which shows that Uganda is taking steps towards her commitment to achieving the first of the six EFA goals. Government involvement in the ECCE sub-sector has increased since the beginning of 1990, suggesting the positive impact of the Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) conferences. But it is also evident, that such steps have mainly been directed at the institutional/ministerial level with little directed at the pre-school level. This ‘lop-sided’, ‘top-heavy’ approach has had limited or no effect on both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. The next section looks at how the changes made so far have to a great extent not translated into improvements in the operational life of pre-schools.

PART TWO

Uganda’s ‘lop-sided’, ‘top-heavy’ approach to improving quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision

Introduction

The foregoing section looked at the various steps that the government of Uganda has taken in order to ensure improvement of both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. It is unquestionable that, over the last ten years, there has been increased government involvement in the ECCE sub-sector as never before. But, despite such efforts, both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision could still be described as ‘unsatisfactory’. This, as mentioned earlier, could be attributed to the fact that most of the changes or developments have been directed at the institutional/ ministerial level, rather than the operational life of pre-schools. One such development has been the formation of the Primary and Pre-primary department in the Ministry of Education and Sports. Such uneven or limited approach has had far reaching effect on quality and accessibility.

Effect of the ‘lop-sided’, ‘top-heavy’ approach to quality and accessibility

As a sub-sector, ECCE has remained a private sector responsibility. This in itself has resulted in widespread low quality due to the absence of active government involvement. There has also been inequality with regards to the number of children accessing pre-school services. Inaccessibility in provision has been mainly due to the location of programs, as well as the socio-economic standing of families. The 2001 national household survey revealed that the central region had the biggest percentage of pre-school centres (Muheirwe *et.al.*, 2002) with virtually none in other parts of the country. But even those children who live in the central region in particular and urban centres in general, the income level of their parents affects their chances of accessing provision. The government does not have control of when and where pre-school centres are set up, nor does it control the amount of tuition fees that parents are charged for the services (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). Although low attendance may also be attributed to other factors such as norms, traditions, the cultural beliefs of societies, as well as limited parent/community awareness, the fact is that a great number of children are not reaping the benefits of participating in pre-school education prior to entering formal schooling. Thus, only a limited number of children continue to have access to ECCE provision. This is however contrary to section 18 (2) of the Uganda constitution, which states that ‘the State shall take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standard possible’ (Constitution of Uganda, 1995). This section of the constitution indicates that ‘every citizen’, not just those who can afford it and certainly not just those above the age of seven (the age when children enter primary schooling) should have access to quality education. The constitution also mandates the government to be responsible for leading the provision of education although it encourages individuals, the private sector and NGOs to join the government’s efforts to educate Ugandans (children inclusive) (See Article 18 (I and 111) of the 1995 Uganda Constitution).

Absence of strong government involvement has led to a spectrum of ECCE arrangements that fall short in many important ways. Under the existing arrangement, the form and content of early childhood provision is largely a matter for the various providers. Although a curriculum was developed and disseminated in 2005, only 2000 copies were printed and distributed. Also it was never pre-tested, and there was no development of a teachers’ guide on how to use the new curriculum guidelines, making its use very difficult. As a result, curriculum guidelines and recommendations concerning teaching and methodology have continued to be issued by individual organizations to their members, while individual

providers have ‘picked’ and ‘mixed’ what they view as ‘useful’ to aid in their provision. Some providers are forced to approach primary schools for guidance on what to be taught in their settings. Thus, children 3-6 years are being taught things that do not match their ability. Yet it is emphasized that at this stage, teaching should be focused on overall emotional, social and psychological development rather than reading, writing and numbers, (Gunzenhauser and Caldell, 1986; EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000) if children’s developmental needs are to be met.

The learning environments in most pre-schools could be described as inadequate. Centers are crowded, with a teacher/child ratio of up to 1:50. Most premises are makeshift houses that are in a very sorry state and therefore not conducive for effective teaching and learning (Ka Tutandike, 2008). This in most cases means that the health and safety of children is being compromised as many centers have play grounds and equipment that are not safe; no appropriate toilets/latrines for both boys and girls; and no clean and safe water for drinking, for play activities, for the school kitchen, and for children’s hand-washing. While the government is responsible for the provision of guidelines for the establishment and management of these institutions, under the existing system, standards are developed and promoted by the providers themselves. And because the different providers come to the field with varying motives and experiences, quality varies greatly. Thus, although quality control is a legitimate function of the state through the Ministry of Education and Sports, it is still very weak at the pre-primary level (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002; EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). Inspection therefore remains a rare practice, and non-existent in many parts of the country (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002).

In addition, there is an acute shortage of trained teachers in this sector, which has meant that many centres operate with caregivers who are not professionally experienced or qualified. In 1998, the Education Planning Department figures revealed that up to 12 percent of teachers were not trained (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). Although the government had pledged to increase the number of colleges training early childhood teachers to 10, this did not materialize and it actually ended in phasing out three institutions; BKC Ngora, Ggaba and Christ the King (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). The few institutions that exist are understaffed, and over 78% of them are neither licensed nor registered (Ministry of Education and Sports report on Teacher Training Institutions, 2006). Also, institutions are mainly located in urban centers, which make them literally inaccessible especially by people in rural

areas. For those students that enroll, many drop out for lack of tuition fees. The average tuition fees ranges between 50,000 to 300,000 Uganda shillings per term (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). This is very expensive by Ugandan standards, given the fact that the standard of living is one dollar per day (which is an equivalent of 1,500 Uganda Shillings). In addition, there is no incentive for anyone to be lured into joining the ECCE profession; the working conditions, remuneration and recruitment, promotion opportunities, and the status of the profession are less than desirable. All of these have resulted in the creation of a 'mediocre' teaching profession, as well as affecting the morale of those already working in the sector.

Government funding in this area has also remained limited (Ka Tutandike, 2008). Although the government acknowledges the importance of ECCE as a crucial stage in preparing children for primary schooling, this has not been reflected in the amount of money allocated to the sub-sector. For example there is no line budget for ECCE, but public expenditure on Universal Primary education rose from 0.94% during the financial year 1995/1996 to 7.96 percent in 1998/1999 (EFA Assessment Report, 2000). Also, Uganda spends on average 2% of its annual GDP per capita on the army (CIA World Fact Book, 2006). Limited investment may be due to the fact that the fruits of investing in this sub-sector are not immediately reaped but rather they take time to be realized. Also difficult economic conditions have dictated Uganda's ability to invest in this sub-sector. Investment therefore has remained a private responsibility including private individuals, donor and other agencies, yet with all this put together, investment still remains minimal (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000).

Limited investment in the sub-sector as well as lack of a research tradition (West and Shackleton, 1999), have both affected research capacity in the ECCE sub-sector. Limited funding in particular has created a problem of lack of ECCE research specialists. Even the few researchers that do exist cannot undergo expert training, making them lack technical competence. Worse still, the few trained competent researchers that exist may prefer to devote themselves to contractual consultation work sponsored by foreign organizations. Limited investment and the lack of trained personnel, has meant that in most cases research findings are often of poor quality, with limited opportunities for dissemination.

Also, because primary education is free, more and more children are joining primary schools. About 10 percent of pre-school going children are in primary schooling (Muheirwe *et al.*,

2002). This means that children are being exposed to a primary school curriculum, which is repeated when children access primary one. This in most cases is the most contributory factor to high repetition rates in primary schools. Statistics estimate that the percentage of children who drop out at primary one stands at 14.2 percent and 7.1 for those (both boys and girls) who survive to grade 5 (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). Thus, unless children are gradually prepared for primary schooling, many children will continue to drop out in the early years of primary schooling. This may be mainly due to boredom.

And lastly, data on the extent and nature of provision in terms of quantity and quality is still inadequate. For example, data to show how many children accessed pre-school provision between 1990 and 1997 is not available (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). Also data showing what has been invested in ECCE is not available since 1990 apart from 1998, of which is still impossible to determine what specifically was allocated to ECCE (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). The lack of hard, reliable and timely data makes it impossible for the government to plan and evaluate the sector and also to formulate policies that are well informed and hence accurately targeted to where the need for improvement lies.

Summary

The available literature reveals that the ‘operational life’ of pre-schools has remained ‘untouched’, meaning that the issue of quality and accessibility is yet to be addressed. Thus many children are still not accessing any form of ECCE prior to starting pre-schooling, while those that do, they are still being educated in conditions that are not conducive to their learning and development. Yet there is every reason for the government of Uganda to rethink her approach to educating her young generation, who are ultimately her future. This is because as a nation:

- Uganda has the highest population above that of its counterparts in the region, and it is growing at a rate of 3.3% per annum. This also means that the number of pre-school age children is on the increase. It is most likely that Uganda will be one of the eight countries that will contribute significantly to the predicted increase in the world population of 9.1 billion people by 2050 (Reuters Foundation, 2005);

- Approximately 40% of children grow up in conditions of abject poverty, which means that their chances of accessing Early Child Education programs are minimal. Because of limited income, many families opt to save money for their children's later schooling;
- The existence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has left over 30% of children orphaned (Aids Orphans Education Trust, 2005). Some children have lost one or both of their parents, which means a decline in the family income. Most children are sent to live with relatives who also have their own families to look after. In most cases, such children are forced to look for jobs in order to contribute to the income of the family rather than attending ECCE programs;
- Uganda stands to lose given the well documented benefits that children derive from attending a good quality ECCE and their relationship to a country's socio-economic development (ECCD Briefs, 1999; The Basic Education Coalition, 2003; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 1999; Lewit and Schuurmann, 1995; Ramsey and Ramsey, 2003); Denton, 2000);
- Statistics estimate that the percentage of children who drop out at primary one stands at 14.2% and 7.1% for those (both boys and girls) who survive to grade 5 (EFA Country Assessment Report, 2000). This is as a result of a 'primary school' approach to curriculum teaching in ECCE, as well as the limited chances for children to pass through some form of ECCE prior to starting primary schooling.

All the above make it even more imperative for the government of Uganda to put in place an action plan to address the early learning opportunities of children. But at the moment, as well as access to ECCE being determined by such factors as social-economic status and location, quality in provision is far from conducive. This means that many children are still not given a fair start in life.

The present study raises one key question as to why even with government commitment to institutional/ ministerial level changes and international donor support, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems. This question is addressed by exploring factors both internal and external to Uganda that have impacted upon efforts to fulfil the commitment

made at Jomtien in 1990. The next Chapter discusses the methodological approach, which was used for this inquiry in three selected Districts- Jinja, Kampala and Wakiso.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Design and Methodology

PART ONE

Research Methodology

Introduction

This study employs a research methodology that is suited to investigating the problem of low quality and low accessibility for children in ECCE provision in Uganda. As Chapter One has shown, this problem dates back to the introduction of western education, which brought about significant changes to ECCE provision; changes such as its ‘compartmentalization’, and the introduction of a new term, ‘quality’. Thus unlike in the traditional past where children’s areas of learning and development were not divided into separate sections, western education brought about this division by separating learning into areas such as Christianity, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Also, unlike traditional early childhood education that educated children in their respective cultures without a defined ‘nationally’ binding curriculum or quality ingredients, western education brought about specific ‘internationally’ defined quality ingredients. Such quality ingredients encompass areas such as the curriculum, the teachers, the teaching methods, the teaching/learning materials, the learning environments, and the language of instruction.

Evidently, interest in the issue of quality in ECCE has increased in recent years. This is partly attributed to numerous research studies, which have pointed to all-round benefits that children derive from attending quality ECCE. This has resulted in the international community doing four things: providing the definition of quality in ECCE; increasing funding; providing technical assistance and scientific knowledge; and capacity building through training. All of these have been introduced in order to ensure that all children regardless of their social, political, and economic status have access to quality pre-school education. In addition, the international community has delineated steps that respective countries should take. These include governments’ political will or commitment to allocating funds to the ECCE sub-sector, as well as ensuring a strong partnership among stakeholders at all levels.

It was pointed out in Chapter One that in 1990 at the Jomtien conference and later in 2000 at the Dakar Conference, Uganda was one of the countries that acknowledged and hence pledged her commitment to ensuring the delivery, of an expanded and improved comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. As a result, as discussed in Chapter Three, Uganda has adopted various strategies in order to ensure that her pledge is realized. Such approaches have included the formation of the Department of Primary and Pre-primary Education and the formulation and dissemination of an ECCE curriculum (also known as the Learning Framework). Government's efforts have been supplemented by increased activities of donor agencies and NGOs in the country. For example, in addition to partially funding the development of the learning framework, the World Bank and UNICEF have been involved in advocacy, sensitization, and the opening up of various ECCE centres in different parts of the country.

Despite the above-mentioned efforts however, the issue of Uganda's attainment of the desired quality and accessibility in ECCE provision by 2015 still raises questions. Thus, as discussed in Chapter Three, irrespective of the various steps that the government of Uganda has taken in an attempt to fulfill her commitment made at Jomtien seventeen years ago, the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision could still be described as 'unsatisfactory'. Many centres still operate without curriculum guidelines; many are crowded; and many operate without trained teachers.

Purpose of the research

This study investigates the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. It explores the extent to which Uganda has expanded and improved ECCE and raises the key question as to why even with Uganda's commitment to institutional/ministerial changes and international donor support, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems? This question is addressed by looking at factors both internal and external to Uganda that have impacted upon efforts to fulfil the commitment made at Jomtien in 1990.

Several studies have been carried out since 1990 by the government of Uganda, UNESCO and other various aid agencies. These include the 1992 Government White Paper on Education, and the 2000 EFA Assessment Report. Also, independent academic pieces of research have been carried out by people like Muheirwe *et al.*, (2001). Although these studies

‘shed light’ on the prevailing patterns of provision in ECCE and the contributory factors to such provision, they have been limited in many respects. I will mention three:

- Firstly, such studies have not been targeted wholly at the area of ECCE. For example, the 1992 Government White Paper on Education and the 2000 Education For All Assessment report aimed at reviewing the whole education system. Also, the 2001 study by Muheirwe *et al*, looked at early childhood development as a whole including nutrition and immunization;
- Secondly, studies have on the whole tended to focus more on the structural features of ECCE provision such as buildings, teacher/child ratio, while little is mentioned about the process features for instance teacher/child interaction and relationship, approach to discipline, and assessment of children’s learning and development;
- And lastly, factors affecting quality and accessibility in ECCE, as well as the causes, have been identified and generalised at the national level. Thus, views and ideas of stakeholders at the ‘grass root’ level such as head teachers, teachers, parents, and local council members, have not been explored.

This study therefore seeks to respond to such limitations by focusing on issues pertaining to quality and accessibility in ECCE in Uganda, by collecting views of stakeholders at all levels. This will not only help in exhaustively reporting on the existing process and structural features of quality in ECCE provision in the districts studied, but also the effect the current pattern of provision is having on children’s learning and development. It will also help in exploring the contributory factors (national and international, as well as historic) to such patterns in provision.

Qualitative methodology was employed in this study in order to explore and investigate the research question mentioned earlier. The next section discusses this method of research, as well as the reasons for choosing it over and above other methods.

Qualitative Methodology

Fieldwork was conducted in Uganda using qualitative interpretive research methodology, which comprises three tenets namely describing, understanding and exploring (Tellis, 1997).

It suited this study inasmuch as it is subject-centred, and oriented to exploring life experiences, with a particular emphasis on diverse personal, cultural and social contexts. Qualitative interpretive research differs markedly from quantitative research. That is, it attempts to determine the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of a situation (Gudmundsdohir, 1998). In this study, the use of qualitative research helped to collect information on to ‘what’ extent the problem of poor quality in Uganda is; ‘how’ it is affecting children’s learning and development; and ‘why’ the problem still continues to persist despite concerted efforts both nationally and internationally to alleviate it. Also, unlike quantitative research, which is about measurements and numbers, qualitative research attempts to give answers that help to establish the thinking rather than the behaviour of the person (s) involved in the study (Wood, 2006). In this study, the use of qualitative method helped to establish the thinking /opinions of teachers, head teachers, parents, government officials, as well as national and international NGO representatives on the following issues:

- The importance attached to pre-schooling;
- Present government involvement in ECCE school practice; and
- Factors both internal and external to Uganda that have impacted upon efforts to improve both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision.

By involving respondents through the use of in-depth interviews, the researcher engaged in research that probed deeper understanding of the study rather than examining surface features (Johnson, 1995).

Another advantage of qualitative research is that it employs an insider’s perspective and studies human behaviour within the context in which it occurs rather than manipulating that context. This means that variables are studied while going about their normal routines (Maanen, 1983, p. 255). That is, unlike other forms of research such as experimental or laboratory research that creates artificial contexts for data collection, (and hence criticized on grounds of personal bias as in most cases the researcher has control over the variables under study) (Colorado State University, 2008), qualitative research is ‘naturalistic’. Thus, the researcher does not impose restrictive a priori classification on the collection of data because the study is less driven by very specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks, and more concerned with emergent themes and idiographic descriptions (Cassell & Symon, 1994). Qualitative research therefore, looks at the situation under study from a holistic perspective, while collecting data through direct encounter with the person (s) involved. This makes

qualitative research an intensely personal and subjective style of research (Tellis, 1997). In this study, the researcher observed and interviewed all respondents in their natural environments. For example, head teachers and teachers were interviewed and observed in their own schools, and children were also observed in their natural surroundings.

And lastly, this methodology allows the use of other approaches. In this study, these included case study, interviews, photography, and participant observation.

The concern of every research whether qualitative or quantitative is how to guarantee validity and reliability of data. Both validity and reliability refer to the ability to evaluate the genuineness of research results and the soundness of the research conclusions (Cano, 2001). In order to ensure reliability and validity in this study, the researcher did five things:

- As qualitative research is based on the interpretative paradigm of the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Morgan, 1980), this poses the challenge of authenticity, contextualization, subjectivity of the researcher and the researched, and minimization of illusion (Fryer, 1991). In this study, such challenges were dealt with by the researcher interviewing some respondents twice, as well as checking every oral source against other oral and written sources. This as a result helped in validating the data collected and hence provided opportunities for clarification.
- The researcher used data recording sheets to facilitate document analysis. Responses from all the respondents were grouped. The researcher then counted the number of agreements by different respondents;
- Respondents were shown extracts of the researcher's interpretation of their interviews. This increased validity in that research subjects were in position to corroborate or disapprove of the interpretation;
- The researcher employed the use of methodological triangulation. That is, more than one method of data collection was employed in the present study. The methods included participant observation and photography in the six selected pre-schools, interviews with head teachers, teachers and parents of children attending the visited pre-schools, parents of children who do not attend any form of pre-schooling, local government officials at the village and districts levels, ECCE teacher training college directors and tutors, national and international NGO representatives, as well as

personnel involved in the production of ECCE teaching and learning materials. This as a result helped to provide a much more rounded, accurate and holistic view (Patton, 1980) on the reasons why even with international donor support, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems?

- And lastly, interpretation and analysis of data were measured against background data drawn from international, national and donor community documentation.

All the above helped to establish whether the research results allowed the researcher to hit ‘the bull’s eye’ of the research objective, and gave the researcher more ‘credible and defensible results’ (Johnson, 1997, p. 283). Qualitative research therefore, allowed the use of analytical tools and skills to evaluate source materials and hence write a qualitative research report.

Case study research

This study necessitated a method of data collection and analysis, which embodied the following qualities and characteristics:

- A strategy which engages recent discussions in educational research, and which is flexible enough to allow the employment, though to a lesser extent, of other methodologies;
- The ability to harness various sources of information, resulting in a study, which is coherent, informative and as accurate as possible.

The researcher found the case study as the suitable approach which embodied the qualities and characteristics mentioned above and hence the need to describe it in more detail.

Bromley (1990) describes a case study as ‘the systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest’ (p. 302). It is designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data (Stake, 1995). Thus, it is flexible enough to allow the researcher to broaden the focus and application of the research in a natural and interactive environment (Tarah, 2001).

In this research, the case study had three tenets: the research question (s), unit (s) of analysis, and criteria to interpret the findings. The research question (s) covered (and/or sought to collect data on) the reasons as to why even with international donor support and government

commitment to institutional changes, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems. The units of analysis comprised six pre-schools where the researcher spent five days in each school collecting data through photography, participant observation, and interviews. Interpretation of findings occurred in a process that Yin (1994) refers to as 'iterative'. That is, the researcher moved between the literature and field data and back to the literature.

The length of the fieldwork was four months (from the 3rd of March 2007 to the 3rd of July 2007). Permission for research and conducting interviews with some of the respondents was obtained in advance prior to my going to the field in Uganda. This was done through making phone calls, writing letters, and sending emails.

Uganda is one of three East African countries. Its name was derived from the ancient kingdom of Buganda, which occupied most of the central part of the country (Lubyayi, 2003). It is a landlocked country and it is bordered by Sudan to the North, Kenya to the East, Tanzania and Rwanda to the South, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the West. It is home to one of the longest rivers in the world (the river Nile), and the equator crosses right through the middle of the country between latitude 4°12' to the North, 1°29' to the South, and between Longitude 29°34' to the East and 35°00' to the West (Olinga and Lubyayi, 2003; Plan Uganda, 2007).

The population of Uganda has increased drastically since 1948 and it is estimated at 27.4 million (Uganda Population Housing Census, 2002). The population is unevenly distributed, with the central region having the largest percentage (27 percent), while the Western, the Eastern and the Northern region have 29 percent, 25 percent, and 22 percent respectively (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

Fieldwork took place in six selected pre-schools in three Districts in Uganda. One of the districts differs in ethnicity and cultural practices, while all of them did differ in economic conditions. The researcher selected Kampala District and Wakiso District from the Central Region, and Jinja District from the Eastern Region. In Jinja District, three pre-schools were selected, while two pre-schools were selected from Kampala District and one pre-school from Wakiso District (which is discussed in Chapter Seven as the 'model' Pre-school).

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Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section

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My choice of districts was influenced largely by the following reasons:

- Kampala and Jinja are the oldest, leading and strategically placed districts in Uganda. Kampala District is home to the country's Capital City, the major industries and education administrative offices, as well as the major NGOs and donor offices in the country. Jinja District on the other hand is the second largest town in the country, which though it has lost its position as the major industrial town, it is still home to a number of big industries in the country. Beside, considerations are under way to accord it a city status;
- Kampala District is the locus for making decisions particularly on ECCE. One would expect ECCE in and around Kampala to benefit a great deal from this close socio-political and economic proximity to the decision-making entities in the city. Also, given its status and close proximity to 'the centre' (Kampala) one would expect ECCE centres in Jinja to be relatively more developed than centres in districts that are situated further away from Kampala;
- Although Jinja District provided the typical urban, semi-urban and rural divide, as well as a variety of the different ECCE providers (private-individual/family, parent/community, NGOs and other organizations, company/corporate, churches and mosques), Kampala District on the other hand did not. In terms of location, Kampala provided two pre-schools in the urban and semi-urban areas. And in terms of provider, Kampala District provided only private and church run nursery schools. And because it was necessary to get a balanced study, Wakiso District was chosen and it provided a community run nursery school, and in a rural setting.

Although selection of the districts was not random, the researcher employed the use of simple random sampling in selecting the pre-schools for the study. Two characteristics determined the classification of pre-schools in the selected districts. First and foremost, pre-schools were classified according to their location-urban, semi urban, and rural. The three districts were divided into sub-counties, which provided a clear distinction between urban, semi-urban and rural. Secondly classification depended on the type of pre-schools in each category as defined by their source of financing: private-individual/family, parent/community, NGOs and other organizations, company/corporate, and churches and mosques. The above two characteristics are typical of ECCE provision in Uganda. Using pieces of paper, all the pre-schools with the

same characteristics in the chosen districts were put in one container and covered (although in some instances, there were only one pre-school of its kind in some districts). The researcher then randomly picked the sample pre-schools for the study. Such random sampling helped the researcher to deal with the problem of improper or biased sampling in the following ways:

- First and foremost, it helped to guard against the selection of pre-schools that were convenient, a thing that in turn might have meant that one category (for example urban, or private pre-schools) could be over represented in the study;
- Secondly, it helped to guard against ‘judgmental’ sampling; which mainly bases selection on things like visual inspection and professional judgment (OSWER Directive, 1995). In other words, the researcher might only pick those pre-schools that are in line with the study, for example only pre-schools with no toilets, no trained teachers, and no resources, and hence predicting statistical interpretation of the sampling results;
- And lastly, it helped to ensure that all the pre-schools in each category, had the same chance of being selected, as opposed to the researcher being in control and hence deciding which pre-schools should be selected for the study.

All the above helped to ensure that a representative sample was obtained for the study. This is because the purpose of taking a sample is to investigate features of the population in greater detail than would be achieved if the entire total population (quota sampling) is used, and to draw inferences about this population. This describes the large and dynamic collection of items relevant to the objective from the sample subsets chosen. Generally, the population of interest is very large, while the sample represents a smaller subset of all items or units (Holden, 1994). With this in mind, the researcher selected three pre-schools from Jinja District, two pre-schools from Kampala District, and one pre-school from Wakiso District, but making sure that the sample represented the urban, semi-urban and rural divide, as well as the different providers in the country. This helped in ensuring that the selected sample pre-schools were complete cases leading to a study that was manageable, useful, relevant and as accurate as possible. In this study, the use of sampling was not only efficient and cheap, but it allowed the researcher to collect a lot more detailed information from a small portion of the population, and then used it to project knowledge to a much larger population. That is, because the selected sample pre-schools generally posed the same characteristics as those in

the entire ECCE provision, the study provided knowledge that is more likely to apply to similar settings in Uganda.

Findings that are presented in Chapter Five therefore derive from a qualitative methodology based primarily on the case studies in Kampala and Jinja Districts (Findings from Wakiso District are discussed in Chapter Seven, the ‘model’ program). As mentioned earlier however, other sources were employed including participant observation, interviews and photography. The use of a multi-method approach helped the researcher to obtain a much more rounded picture of the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda.

PART TWO

Ethical Issues

Informed consent and Anonymity

By its very nature, qualitative research is subjective, exploratory, and process oriented and brings with it a greater likelihood that ethical issues such as those associated with informed consent and anonymity will arise (Konza, 1998). Informed consent refers to participants having all the relevant details regarding the research, enabling them to voluntarily agree to participate in the research (Polit and Becks, 2004; Kanuka and Anderson, 2007). In other words, ‘informed consent’ is a tool for ensuring respect for persons during research (Wood *et al.*, 2001; Nolen and Putten, 2007). In this study, the researcher made sure that participants were informed in writing and verbally about the following issues:

- Full disclosure about the purpose and scope of the study;
- The benefits that might accrue as a result of participating;
- Honesty about who the researcher was;
- The type of questions which were likely to be asked;
- The use to which the results were likely to be put;
- The method of anonymity;
- The extent to which participants’ utterances were to be used in the study;
- The right to withdraw from the study.

Participants were given time to consider whether to participate or not, and to ask questions of the researcher prior to participating. Rather than treating consent as a one-off event, the researcher treated it as an on-going process. The researcher obtained verbal consent from all the participants.

Anonymity on the other hand suggests that if and when information is shared, no data that would allow identification of the participants such as names and addresses will be disclosed (Jones et al., 2006; Kanuka and Anderson, 2007). In order to deal with the issue of anonymity, this study employed the use of pseudonyms, as well as altering any other identifying details of the participants.

PART THREE

Sources of information

Primary and secondary sources

Information sources used in this study were generally categorized into two groups, namely, primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are raw materials, which allow the researcher to access original and unedited information as he or she interacts with the source of information and extracts information. In essence, primary sources present information in its original form, neither interpreted nor evaluated nor condensed by other writers (James Cook University, 2006). In this study, primary sources comprised interviews, participant observation and photography. Primary sources also constituted other relevant sources that were kept in the special collections department at Makerere University main library in Kampala. These included reports, journals, speeches, manuscripts, articles in newspapers, and other unpublished work.

Secondary sources on the other hand, are works that interpret or analyze an historical event or phenomena. In essence, they are second hand accounts of an event created by someone not present when the event took place. They are generally at least one step or more, removed from the event (Scott, 2004). In this study, secondary sources comprised both published and unpublished materials such as articles in journals, dissertations, theses and books deposited in various libraries and special collections in the University of Edinburgh, Makerere University main library, and Kyambogo University library in Kampala.

The researcher studied in great detail secondary sources before proceeding to collect primary sources. However the bulk of this study was based predominantly on authentic and newly discovered primary source materials, hence making this study an original contribution to scholarship.

PART FOUR

Methods of data collection

Secondary data collection

Secondary data was used extensively in this study. The main types of documents that were reviewed included:

- Government reports and information;
- Education For All assessment reports;
- International conferences and agreements; and
- Donor community documentations

Information was gathered from online sources by visiting specific websites such as UNESCO, the World Bank and UNICEF. Searches were conducted by mainly using the ‘Google’ search engine. Within Uganda, information was collected from government agencies and private organizations, and special collections section in Makerere University library. Although the use of documents may raise a number of methodological issues such as criteria for their selection, the selection of documents used in this study was not random but was based on choice, determined entirely by their suitability for the study.

Primary data collection

In addition, the researcher needed to acquire more information about the prevailing nature and extent of ECCE provision in Uganda, as well as the contributory factors to the pattern in provision. In order to acquire primary data for the study, interviews, participant observation, and photography were used.

Individual interviews

One-to-one interviews were used in this study. Interviews on average, lasted between thirty to forty minutes, but the length depended to a great extent on factors such as the time available, personality, and level of articulation. Specific questions were formulated for each work area, with the aim of drawing out particular types of knowledge and experience. Thus, although respondents from the same work area were asked the same questions, the style was ‘free-flowing or freewheeling’, rather than rigid. As a result, there was flexibility in phrasing and ordering of the questions (Parahoo, 1997). Interviews therefore, sought out different

information from those holding distinct positions such as head teachers, teachers, local council members, District Inspectors of Schools (DIS), District Education Officers (DEO), national and international NGO representatives, ECCE teacher training college directors and tutors, ECCE specialists, policy analysts, government officials and researchers.

Although individual interviews have been criticized on grounds of being costly and time consuming (setting up, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, feedback and reporting), they were suited for this study in the following ways:

- People who may have been reluctant to raise issues in an open forum were prepared to raise them in a confidential environment (GfK Slovenija 2008). That is, the respondents felt free to say what they thought without fear of subjecting their views to examination by their Colleagues;
- The interviewees were able to discuss their perception and interpretation of the study at hand; it was their expression from their point of view (Kajornboon, 2005);
- Individual interviews made it possible for every informant to narrate facts as accurately as they possibly could, without making prior consultations with other informants, which could result into contamination of information;
- The researcher was able to adapt the questions as necessary, to clarify doubt, and to ensure that the responses were properly understood, by repeating or rephrasing the questions;
- The researcher was also able to pick-up non-verbal cues from the respondents. Discomfort, stress and problems that the respondent experienced were detected through frowns and other body language, unconsciously exhibited by the interviewees; things that would have been impossible to detect in a telephone interview or a questionnaire.

Questions were open-ended, informed and specific as they were more suited to the nature, purpose and setting of this research. This is because the respondents were given room to expound on the topic and also to volunteer information. Open-ended questions also gave the respondents the opportunity to express themselves in their own words. Questions built upon responses of the informants and followed their trend of thought, though still within the particular parameters defined by the interview guide (which helped to ensure that the main investigative concerns were being addressed).

Data collected was preserved by tape recording most of the interviews and taking notes during those, which for some reason were not recorded. The whole process was explained to the respondents prior to the interviews commencing. Recording helped in avoiding to miss out any details of the interviews. The tape recordings were later transcribed and were used together with the notes as sources of information for the study.

This study employed a ‘bottom-up’ approach. Thus, rather than starting from the Ministry of Education and Sports, the researcher conducted research starting from the grass root. The first phase of interviews was conducted with teachers, head teachers, parents and community leaders in the selected case study pre-schools. The interviews aimed at identifying problems in ECCE programs. These analytical concerns defined the basic structure of the interviews and provided the organizing principle for questions on each time period. During interviews, the researcher crosschecked information offered by interviewees with written data sources, which often generated a new line of questioning.

The second phase of interviews was conducted with relevant local and central government officials, directors and tutors in ECCE teacher training colleges, local and national NGO representatives, as well as donor agency representatives. These interviews aimed to identify variables within and outside Uganda that have continued to affect both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. Again, these analytical concerns defined the basic structure of the interviews. Specific questions were formulated for each work area and time period basing on information obtained from the previous set of interviews, and a review of available records.

Interviews, like other means of data collection used in this study (direct observations of settings in the six specially selected nursery schools, documentation and photography) contributed information, which was reliable and as accurate as could be achieved.

Apart from the respondents in the selected pre-schools, the researcher employed the use of **reputation sampling**. This was an approach that helped to locate information-rich key informants (Patton, 1990). The main objective was the identification of people with particular knowledge, skills and/or characteristics that were needed for the study at hand. The reputation sampling technique involves the use of an initial list of respondents, a specialized list of

persons, who manifest the criteria or ‘key informants’. The technique assumes that those people are aware of others with similar information. Thus, prior to going to the field, the researcher drew out a limited list of key informants from a cross-section of people involved in ECCE. These included the commissioner and assistant commissioner for ECCE, coordinator ECCE section at the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), and four officers from Non Governmental Organizations. After each interview, respondents were requested to supply names of additional informants. Thus referral by respondents provided a chain by which the interview process followed. This snowballing assumption in reputational design (in which current respondents know of and suggest additional respondents) was the basis to the application of the reputational sampling technique.

However, given the importance of the chains and the need to control the interview process, extensive documentation of these chains was maintained. In addition, a confidential file on key informants and the initial interview contacts suggested by the key informants, and subsequent referrals to possible informants by respondents was maintained. Documentation helped the researcher to check possible re-appearances of some informants in the previous lists (re-appearances which served to some extent as the determining factor for choosing those to be interviewed next). When using this technique, it is most likely that individuals with high visibility or those acquainted with more people have greater probability of being selected than the ‘social isolate’ (Sudman, 1976). But overall, the technique allowed the identification and selection of those people that were best suited for the needs of the study.

Interviews were conducted with a total of 59 respondents. These included:

- 5 head teachers;
- 16 teachers;
- 4 parents of children who attend ECCE programs;
- 2 parents of non-enrollees;
- 3 local council members;
- 5 district officials;
- 8 national and international NGO representatives;
- 5 ECCE teacher training college directors;
- 2 ECCE tutors;
- 9 government officials;
- 1 Education psychologist, writer and sub-editor; and

- 2 proprietors of ECCE material development companies

Although the number of respondents in each category had been restricted to between 4 and 20 partly because of the limited time the researcher had to spend in the field, the actual number of participants in each category was influenced by their availability. Nonetheless, being a qualitative research, the researcher was able to focus on the limited available number of people representing each category, and acquired in-depth data for the study.

My choice of respondents was influenced by their active involvement in ECCE provision in Uganda in one way or another. For instance, DISs and DEOs were asked various questions along the lines of: how often pre-schools were inspected; what kind of penalties/measures were put in place to address the problem of low standards in ECCE provision; and what problems they encounter in their assigned job of ensuring provision of good quality ECCE. Head teachers were asked questions relating to their views about quality in ECCE provision. Questions covered such issues as how frequent their pre-schools were inspected, how accessible was the government prescribed ECCE curriculum, and whether there existed any kind of government advice and support. Local council members were assessed on their involvement in ECCE provision, and were asked about whether they received any information from relevant government authorities relating to pre-schooling. They were also asked whether they had any practical commitment towards the provision and development of pre-schools in their area in terms of budget, leadership and monitoring.

Participant observation

This study employed the use of participant observation in all the case study schools. Cushing first used this method in his study of the Zuni Indians in the later part of the eighteenth century. Later, people like Malinowski (1929), Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Mead (1928) employed it in their study of the non-western societies. Participant observation presumes that by the researcher immersing himself or herself in the subject being studied, he or she is able to gain a deep understanding of the people under study, than would be with other methods such as the use of questionnaires (one method that has been described by some as an imposition of an externally conceived ‘scientific’ measuring device, on individuals who do not perceive reality according to that external concept) (Bruyn, 1996). Thus, participant observation involves the researcher to live within a given culture for some period (Quinebaug Valley Community College, 2000), while both observing, and at the same participating in the

social life of the group being studied. As a result, the researcher is able to formulate firsthand account of their lives and gain novel insight (Atkinson and Shaffir, 1998; Tsvetkova and Karastateva, 2003).

In this study, the researcher fulfilled the above-mentioned requirements, by spending one week in each of the case study pre-schools. During this one week, the researcher participated in all activities in the various classrooms, as well as school assemblies. Although participant observation has been criticized on grounds of privacy invasion (UK-Learning, 2003) and conflict of interest between the visitor (the researcher) and the people being studied, taking up a teaching role helped to cultivate a trusting relationship with the teachers, children and parents. This as a result helped the researcher not to be viewed as a complete stranger, but as part of the schools daily life. The researcher however, made sure that her role was made known to the teachers, the children, and the parents.

The main purpose of using participant observation was to explore the extent to which quality was lacking in ECCE provision, as well as establishing pre-school-based factors that were contributing to the existing pattern in provision. Thus, participant observation was used to assess the learning environments as well as classroom practice. The researcher observed both the structural and process features of the outdoor and indoor environments with regards to the availability of teaching materials, teacher/child ratio, class size, teacher-child interaction, curriculum, teaching style, approach to assessment, approach to discipline, as well as health and safety,

Photography

Photography was also used as a means of collecting primary data. In each case study pre-school visited, photographs were taken of both the inside and the outside of the school. These included, playgrounds (the size and equipment), rooms (equipment and the layout), and general issues of health and safety (sanitation and ventilation). Photographs acted as a tool in identifying and recording the nature of the present quality in ECCE provision. Photography was preferred to video recording in that although videos may offer an opportunity to observe and re-observe over and over again the data collected, and although they are rich in both visual and verbal data collection, they can be time consuming (Kanstrup, 2002). Photographs on the other hand gave the researcher the opportunity to get a closer look at the study at hand in a quicker (Kanstrup, 2002) and easier way. This is because they are stills, in contrast to

running video pictures, and they are only visual and not verbal. As a result, they were easy to collect, interpret and analyze, and hence provided the researcher with less complex data.

The photographs taken were subsequently used in the interview sessions with the respondents.

The use of photographs was very important for this study in several ways:

- First and foremost, they helped the researcher in challenging the visual imagery bias (Kanstrup, 2002). That is, they helped to confirm or refute whether those who worked in the case study pre-schools interpreted the pictures the same way as the researcher did. Also, they helped to confirm whether the images, as seen from the lens of the camera actually ‘existed’, according to those working in the case study pre-schools. Photographs, like other visual data, therefore gave the researcher an opportunity to collect both valid and reliable information for the study.
- Secondly, Photographs offered an opportunity for the researcher to provide ‘real’ (Nordeman, 1997), or ‘tangible evidence’ for the subsequent interview sessions. This is because, although one can tell a story in words, and in a very articulate way, the issue of validity and reliability may still linger. As a result, it may be difficult for the respondents to take the researcher’s words as ‘gospel truth’. The use of photos in interviews, therefore spared the researcher from being doubted by the respondents, hence the saying, ‘seeing is believing’ (Nordeman, 1997). Photography made it possible for the researcher, to preserve ‘permanent and unmistakable’ (Buckland, 2001, p. 27) evidence for the study.
- Thirdly, photographs acted as a tool to encourage discussion or to provide responses by the interviewees. This is because the use of exclusively verbal interviews may present the problem of communication differences and memory blocks, which may inhibit the flow of information (Wagner, 1979);
- Fourthly, photographs provided informants with a task similar to that of viewing a family album, and hence the strangeness of the interview situation was averted (Horwoth, 2003).
- And lastly, while field notes are often regarded as personal and private documents and rarely shared with others, photographs were easy to share and were used for collaborative research data generation. Because they are single frames in paper materials, they were easily taken to various places and in that way engaged in dialogue whenever the researcher found it appropriate for the study at hand. In this way photographs provided a very flexible way of generating data, by providing several

possibilities for collaboration (Kanstrup, 2002) between the researcher and the respondents.

Data analysis

The process that was used to analyze data produced during fieldwork was grounded theory (also known as constant comparison method). Grounded theory refers to theory that is inductively developed from a body of data. That is, theory is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through methodical data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon under study. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in 'mutual' relationship with each other (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In this study, data analysis was an on-going process during the gathering of primary data. Because note taking was used as the major tool for recording the data being collected, the researcher continuously compared interviews (and other data) against subsequent interviews (and other data). As a result of such continuous comparison, the researcher was able to identify and sort out the collected data and code it on the basis of similarity basing on key themes and/or patterns. Creating categories with and from data helped in condensing the bulk of data sets into analyzable units. Coding therefore enabled the researcher to identify meaningful data and hence set the stage for interpreting it and drawing conclusions.

Strength/limitations

Qualitative methods of research for this study were successful in obtaining data from the population sample in the three districts. However, in the field, there was evidence of realities of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative methodology as portrayed in literature. Due to the nature of the research project (qualitative inquiry) and its reliance on stakeholders at various levels, one major concern and difficulty was the general mistrust in the kind of explorative research being conducted. A practical consequence was the difficulty of recording interviews, as well as taking photographs. From a total of 59 interviews that were conducted, only 11 were recorded. Also, in one case study pre-school, the head teacher did not approve of taking photographs of the school. Such challenges reflected the controversial nature of the issues involved in the research. Another problem was that of gaining access to some informants. This was mainly due to time constraints. This implied that although access was initially granted, this involved considerable efforts to re-schedule interviews. However, the researcher was able to acquire valuable data, interpret it, analyze it, and discuss its implications.

The next Chapter explores findings in Uganda in two districts of research-Jinja and Kampala. Wakiso District (the third district) is discussed in Chapter Seven as the possible ‘model’ program that could be the ‘answer’ to Uganda’s effort to attain both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. The main reason why findings from this ‘model’ program are presented separately rather than alongside the results of the other five pre-schools is to allow sufficient elaboration of the issues related to quality and accessibility in Jinja and Kampala Districts.

The researcher then presents and uses the ‘model’ pre-school in Chapter Seven, in order to show that amidst the problems discussed widely and in detail in this study, there is in fact a solution within Uganda, which is economically achievable and culturally sensitive.

CHAPTER FIVE

Presentation and Discussion of Findings: Case Studies in Jinja and Kampala Districts

Introduction

Chapter Two presented the different ways that the international community has been involved in improving quality and accessibility in ECCE. It was noted that this increased involvement has been as a result of the commitment made at Jomtien in 1990 and later re-affirmed in Dakar in 2000, to which Uganda is a signatory. Such commitment involved the expansion and improvement of comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education as the first of the six EFA goals. It was also noted that such commitment translated into the definition of quality in ECCE provision. Both commitment and definition were guided by numerous research findings that point to the benefits that children derive from attending quality ECCE. Such benefits include:

- Brain development;
- Later school/academic success;
- Economic gains; and
- Social gains.

The definition looked at process and structural elements at the school level that have to be present if quality and accessible ECCE For All is to be achieved. These included:

- Good age-appropriate curriculum with clearly defined goals;
- The use of child-centred approach to teaching;
- The use of authentic assessment when evaluating children's learning and development;
- The use of mother tongue as the language of instruction;
- Good teacher/child interaction;
- Adequate learning materials;
- Good teacher/child relationship;
- Adequate teacher/child ratio;
- Adequate learning environment in terms of buildings, space, classroom furniture and classroom arrangement, classroom daily routines, and health and safety

By being a signatory to the two-above mentioned conferences, therefore, Uganda was ‘pledging’ to work towards the achievement of the first of the six EFA goals that encompass the above-mentioned qualities. This chapter presents and discusses research findings on the extent to which Uganda has expanded and improved ECCE provision or otherwise since 1990, and the effect that the present quality is having on children’s learning and development. This is achieved by exploring both the process and structural quality elements as defined by the international community, in six selected schools. Research findings reveal that children in Jinja and Kampala Districts are not accessing ECCE provision, while many of those that do are being educated in environments that are not conducive to their learning and development.

Findings presented in this chapter therefore, will help to move from the theoretical and generalized picture on the issue pertaining to quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda, to assessing the extent to which both quality and accessibility are lacking in the two major Districts -Jinja and Kampala. Each district therefore, has been researched in order to delineate the present quality and accessibility. Given their position both economically and politically, research findings in Jinja and Kampala Districts, could therefore help to project the present pattern of ECCE provision in Uganda.

As already mentioned in Chapter Four, I carried out four months research in three districts in Uganda, one district in the Eastern region of Uganda (Jinja), and two districts in the central region (Kampala and Wakiso). In Jinja District, I spread my research across all the three counties (Butembe- pre-school J2, Kagoma- pre-school J3, and Jinja central- pre-school J1).

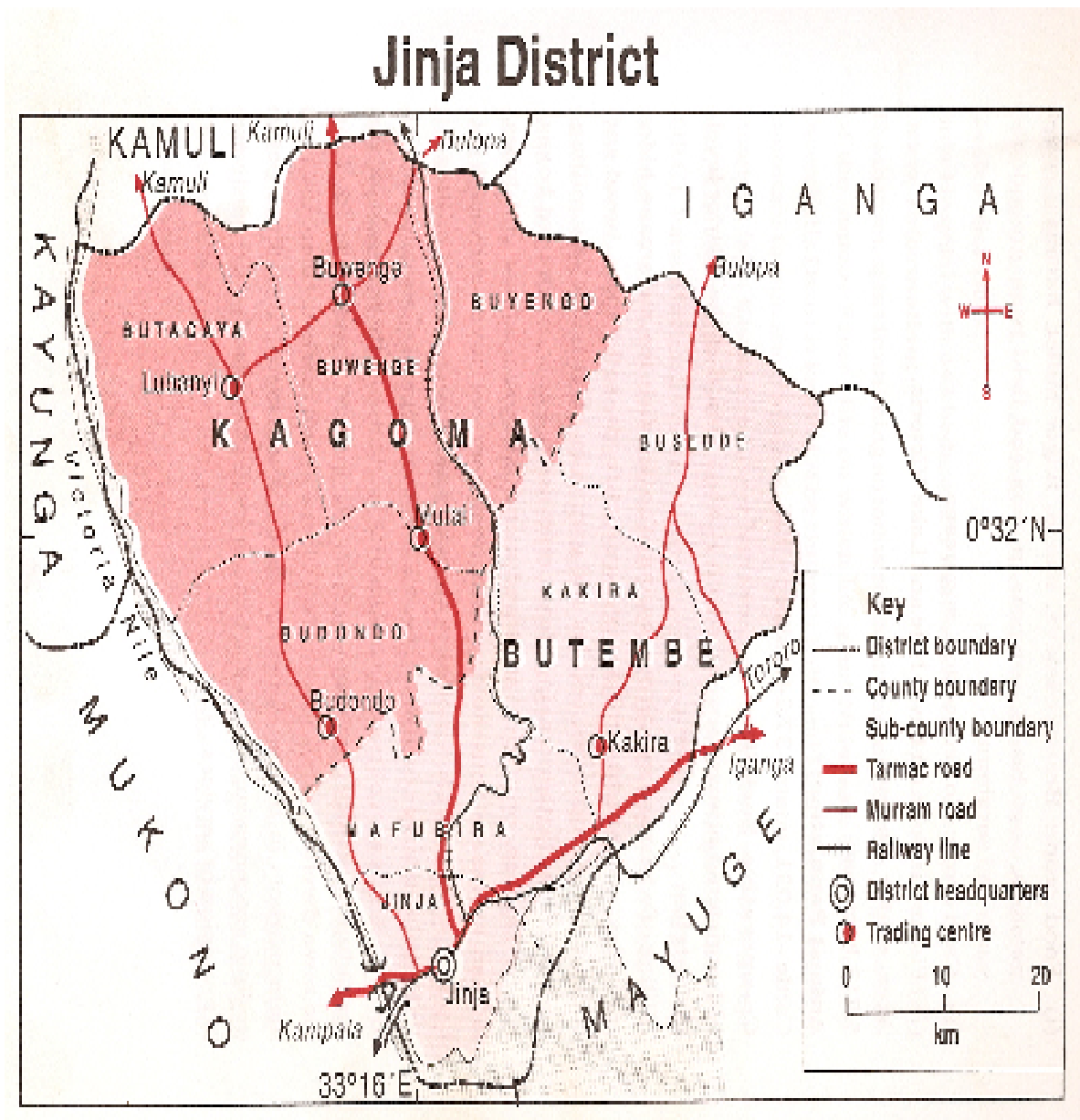


Fig 5.1: Map of Jinja District showing the three areas of research-Jinja Central, Butembe and Kagoma Counties.

In Kampala District, I carried out research in two divisions ¹ (Nakawa- pre-school K1 and Kampala central- pre-school K2).

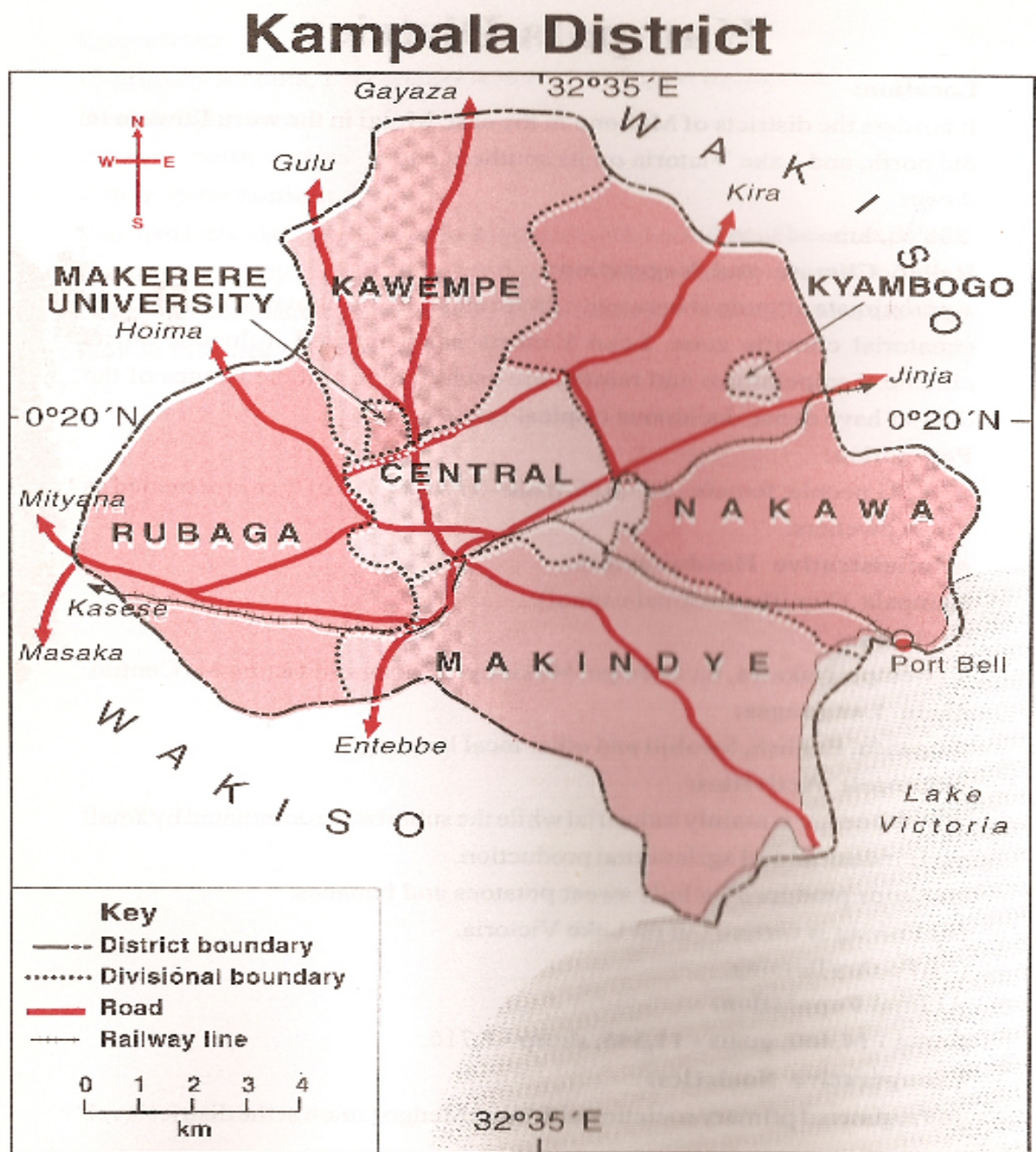


Fig 5.2: Map of Kampala District showing the areas of research-Kampala Central and Nakawa Divisions

¹ A division is an equivalent of a county. The word division is used in Kampala district given its status as the Capital city of the country, and this sets it apart from the rest of the districts

While in Wakiso District I visited one sub-county, Nangabo, (pre-school W1). This is discussed in Chapter Seven as the ‘model’ pre-school.

Just as Jinja, Kampala District consists of numerous pre-schools under different ownership, mainly private and church/mosque run. The aim of this study was to choose three different providers in each district. In Jinja District, because there were no community-run nursery schools, I was limited to choosing one private pre-school (pre-school J1), one company pre-school (pre-school J2), and one mosque-run pre-school (pre-school J3). While in Kampala District, I was limited to choosing one private run pre-school (pre-school K1) and one church run pre-school (pre-school K2), as there were no company-run or community-run nursery schools. Because I could not find a balance in Kampala District, this led me to Wakiso District where a community-run pre-school (pre-school W1) (which is discussed in Chapter Seven as the ‘model’ pre-school) was selected for the study. Also, as well as basing my research on the different providers, location (urban, semi-urban and rural) was another determinant. Jinja District provided the perfect mix, where as Kampala District offered only the urban and semi urban divide. Wakiso District therefore, not only helped to compensate for the lack of balance in Kampala District in terms of providers (community-run), but also in terms of location (rural).

The duration for fieldwork in each pre-school was one week. The first and second day in each school were used to familiarize with the teachers, children and parents; by helping out whenever needed. While the three remaining days were used for observations, taking of photographs, as well as interviews with head teachers, teachers, and parents of children attending the selected pre-schools.

Part one of this chapter explores the district profiles and a brief history of the pre-schools visited in each district. Part two presents research findings on the present quality and accessibility in Jinja and Kampala Districts, and the effect the prevailing quality is having on children’s learning and development.

PART ONE

District profiles

Jinja District: The Eastern Region

Physical description

Jinja District is the second smallest District in Uganda. At independence, Jinja was part of Busoga District. But under the 1974 Provincial Administration, Jinja became a District. The District is 87km from the capital city Kampala, and it is bordered by Iganga District to the East, Mukono District to the Southwest, Kamuli District to the North, and Lake Victoria to the South. It is made up of 3 counties, 11 sub-counties, 46 parishes, and 381 villages. The District has a total land area of 767.7 square kilometres. According to the 1998 population and housing census, the population of Jinja was 289, 476 and daytime traffic of about 80,000 people into Jinja town. The population density is now estimated at 580 people per square kilometer. This makes it the district with the second highest population density in the country after Kampala, which has a density of 4,582 persons per square Kilometres.

Jinja District is accessed from Kampala by a bridge that crosses the Nile River at the Owen Falls Dam. All roads connecting the district onto neighbouring Districts are tarmacked. Also, the district is served with two railway lines (although not operational at the moment) that cross the district from Kampala to Kamuli, Iganga and merge at Namutumba to proceed to Eastern Uganda and Kenya. There are two railway stations in the district.

Ethnicity

As one of the districts that make up the Busoga region, Jinja District is occupied mostly by the Bantu tribe of the Basoga. Although there are many other migratory tribes from within Uganda and a wide Indian community, the official language is Lusoga.

The economy

Located partly on a fertile crescent of Lake Victoria with a well-distributed and reliable rainfall, Jinja District grows a variety of food and cash crops. Thus, in addition to manufacturing and general trade, the main stay of the population is agriculture and animal

husbandry. About 85 percent of families are engaged in crop production as their main activity, 12 percent engage in mixed farming and a much lesser percentage engage in livestock keeping and fishing. The sugar factory has also contracted out growers to supply the industry with mature cane. Although sugarcane and coffee are the main cash crops, other crops such as beans, cassava, bananas, sweet potatoes, maize, groundnuts, cowpeas, yam and sorghum are now being marketed and are thus increasing their market at the expense of sugarcane and coffee. Most of the agriculture is carried out on small family holdings and using family labour. Lake Victoria, a fresh water lake, forms part of the district and a substantial amount of fishing is done, creating a source of employment, income, as well as nutritious food for the people.

Jinja is a tourist town:

- Worldwide, Jinja is known for the source of the Nile where waters from Africa's largest lake-lake Victoria pours into the Nile on its long journey to the Mediterranean Sea;
- It is home to traditional sites such as the seat of the Busoga kingdom and Mpumudde hills cultural site;
- It has numerous hotels and resorts;
- There is the popular Nile rafting up stream at Bujagali falls. Other falls like Owen falls dam, Abuwala falls, Ntanda falls, and Rippon falls are also a tourist attraction.

Jinja District boasts as the country's power engine with two Hydro Electric dams: the Owen falls dam (Nalubaale) and the new Kiira Dam. Jinja District is a busy industrial town with many businesses among others the Nile breweries, Kakira Sugar works, Bidco oil refineries, Vitaform Mattresses, Picfare, and Steel Rolling mills. These industries have created direct employment as well as employment associate support services industries such as housing, office accommodation, recreation centres, Hotels, transport services and car repair garages. Kakira Sugar works, a manufacturer of sugar and other related produces, employ the highest number of people for a single manufacturing entity in the district. Also, with a ferry port at Masese on Lake Victoria, goods are brought to and from Bukoba, Kisumu (Kenya) and Mwanza (Tanzania) ports. Such ferry services also connect to various islands in Lake Victoria such as Kalangala and Buvuma.

A brief history of the pre-schools surveyed in Jinja District

Pre-school J1

Pre-school J1 is located in Jinja Municipality. A lady started it in 1998 after attending an ECCE course, one of the many courses offered by a Christian organization. Pre-school J1 comprised four classrooms; two baby classes (3-4 year olds), one middle class (for 4-5 year olds) and one top class (for 5-6 year olds). Pre-school J1 enrolled 133 children in total, with 56 children in the baby class, 40 in the middle class and 37 in the top class. Because pre-school J1 is private, funding comes from school fees paid by the parents/guardians. This meant that failure to pay school fees on time resulted in children being sent home, although at the time of my visit none of the children had been sent home due to unpaid school fees.

Pre-school J2

Pre-school J2 is located in Butembe County and it was opened by a factory owner to cater mainly for the factory workers' children (although children of non-factory workers are also enrolled). Although there was no document to establish when pre-school J2 was started, the head mistress said that it might have started towards the end of the 1980s (given the fact that the factory was established in 1985). The pre-school comprised two classrooms, with 30 children in the baby/middle classroom and 29 in the top class respectively. For those children whose parents/guardians were factory workers, school fees were paid by the factory owner deducting a certain amount of money at the end of every month from their salary. And for those children whose parents/guardians were not factory workers, school fees were to be paid in full at the beginning of every term. Failure to do so resulted in children being sent home. But at the time of my visit, non-factory worker parents had been given a grace period of two weeks during which school fees had to be paid in full.

Pre-school J3

Pre-school J3 is located in Buwenge County and it was attached to a primary school. Although the primary school section started in the year 2000, the pre-school section did not start until seven years later in 2007. The school is faith-based, with funding coming mainly from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Pre-school J3 comprised one classroom for all the age groups (3-6 year olds) with one teacher, and pre-school classes took place in the school's mosque. At the time of my visit, there were 9 children from a total of 13. Three children had been sent home due to unpaid school fees.

Kampala District: The Central Region

Physical description

Kampala District is named after its 'chief town', the Uganda capital Kampala. It is also the centre of the Buganda Kingdom. Kampala District is almost entirely surrounded by Mpigi and Wakiso Districts, except for Lake Victoria, which forms its border in the South. Kampala District is sub-divided into administrative divisions equivalent to a sub-county. It has five divisions-Makindye, Rubaga, Kawempe, Nakawa and Kampala central. Recently, two more divisions-Makerere and Kyambogo-came into being specially to cater for the needs of large institutions of learning such as Makerere and Kyambogo Universities. However, because of some legal requirements that are yet to be put in place, the two divisions have not yet been fully recognized. Kampala Divisions are further sub-divided into smaller units. There are 99 parishes (LC2) and 998 villages (LC1). The District covers approximately 238 square kilometers including part of Lake Victoria. Land area is 176 square kilometers and lies 1180 meters above sea level.

Ethnicity

Kampala District is home to Baganda tribal group. The main language is Luganda, although other languages are used such as English and Swahili. But all indigenous languages in Uganda are used in the cosmopolitan city.

The economy

Kampala District is mainly industrial but suburbs produce agricultural products such as potatoes, Cassava, beans and green vegetables. Poultry and animal husbandry form part of the city's small-scale industries. The Central Business District (CBD) is Kampala's commercial heartland where most of the business activities take place. Major hotels, banks, markets, shops, offices and leisure sports are located there. The industrial area includes the old industrial area between Nakawa and central Division in the East, as well as Ntinda industrial area also in the East.

A brief history of the pre-schools surveyed in Kampala District

Pre-school K1

Pre-school K1 is located in Nakawa division. It was attached to a primary school and both the nursery and primary sections were started in 1989 by a retired primary school teacher. The pre-school comprised two classrooms; one baby class with an enrolment of 16 children and a combined middle/top class with a total enrolment of 45 children. Pre-school K1 was private and its survival depended on the school fees that the parents paid. At the time of my visit, there were 40 children in the middle/top class as five children had been sent home due to failure to pay school fees.

Pre-school K2

Pre-school K2 is located in Kampala central. It is owned by one of the main-line churches in Uganda, and it started fifty years ago. The pre-school comprised four classrooms; two separate baby classes with an enrolment of 31 and 32 children respectively, the middle classroom with 38 children, and 25 children in the top classroom. Pre-school K2 was privately owned and it depended on school fees paid by the parents/guardians. Most of the children in this pre-school were from affluent families and I was informed by one of the teachers that the school did not experience the problem of late school fees payment.

Although the districts did differ culturally and economically, quality in ECCE provision did not markedly differ. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Kampala and Jinja Districts were chosen due to the fact that they are the oldest, leading and strategically placed districts in Uganda. For example, as well as being home to the capital city of the country, Kampala District is home to the major industries and education administrative offices, as well as the major NGOs and donor offices in the country. Jinja District on the other hand is the second largest town in the country, which, although it has lost its position as the major industrial town, is still home to a number of big industries. Beside, considerations are underway to accord it a city status. Wakiso District was only chosen after I failed to get a balance in terms of type of provider (private, church/mosque, company) and location (urban, semi-urban and rural) in Kampala District.

Given their position in Uganda both politically and economically therefore, Kampala and Jinja Districts could provide research findings that could help to project countrywide patterns in terms of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. This is because, as mentioned in

Chapter Four:

- One would expect ECCE provision in and around Kampala District, to benefit a great deal from the close socio-political and economic proximity to the education decision making entities in the city;
- Also, given its status and close proximity to ‘the centre’ (Kampala), one would expect ECCE centres around Jinja District to be relatively more developed than centres away from Kampala;
- And lastly, by spreading the research on the basis of provider (private, church/mosque and company) and location (urban, semi-urban and rural) research findings would help to provide a clear and detailed picture of the existing pattern in provision.

The next section presents and discusses findings in the case study pre-schools in Jinja and Kampala Districts.

PART TWO

The present quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision and its effect on children’s overall learning and development

The physical outdoor environments of the pre-schools surveyed in both Jinja and Kampala Districts visited did not vary considerably. Apart from pre-school K2, the rest of the pre-schools did not have space for outdoor play or space was available but with no adequate play equipment. For example, in Jinja District, pre-school J1 did not have a permanent play ground because of lack of space. In fact the only space that was available belonged to a boy’s hostel with which the pre-school shared the compound. Because of this, and coupled with the emphasis that was put on academic work, children had only one day in a week, a Friday, that was allocated for outdoor play. It was on this day that the few outdoor play equipment that were stored in the headmistress’s office were brought outside for the children to play with. In pre-school J2, there was a big open space, which the pre-school shared with factory workers’ houses. In essence, pre-school J2 did not have its own outdoor space. There was no outdoor play equipment at all, which meant that during break-time children just loitered around until break time was over (See Fig 5.3). Pre-school J3 did have a permanent play ground which was shared by the primary school section, but with no play equipment. During break time, the

teacher brought out three locally made ropes and two balls to be shared by nine children. In Kampala District, school K1 had a permanent play ground but with only one swing that was never used (See Fig 5.4). Pre-school K2 had a permanent, well equipped play ground with play equipment like swings and climbing frames (See Fig 5.5). But even in pre-school K2, children were not guaranteed to play outside every school day.

The absence of well equipped outdoor space and outdoor time was a clear indication that pre-schools did not view the outdoor environment as a vital part of children's learning and development. And hence more time during the week was devoted to 'book' or class work. This was a clear indication of the importance put on 'academic' achievement rather than children's holistic development. Thus, the absence of outdoor play materials and space worked against helping children to develop their gross and fine motor skills, as well as their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Yet some children spent on average 60 hours a week in ECCE centres. Also, for those children who spent less hours in ECCE centres, it was most likely that after spending half the day in these centres, they were going back to spend the rest of the day with maids (also known as house girls) who hardly had any knowledge of child development. This was indeed a missed opportunity for children to achieve optimal development.



Fig 5.3: Children outdoors during break time in an empty playground in pre-school J2



Fig 5.4: The only play equipment in pre-school K1



Fig 5.5: A well equipped outdoor playground in pre-school K2

The indoor environment in all the pre-schools surveyed in both Jinja and Kampala Districts was inadequate. Classrooms were small, and chairs and tables were squeezed together taking up almost all the classroom space (See Fig 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, and 5.10). This was because the

number of children in the classrooms was usually too big compared to the available space. When talking to one teacher about the available space and the number of children, she said that since ECCE centres were privately owned, the more children there were in a classroom or in a centre as a whole, the more money the owner earned (school J2). According to this teacher, what mattered was not how much children benefited from schooling but how much income the owner gained. Limited space adversely restricted the movement of both teachers and children. When all the children were seated, it was impossible to move from the front to the back of the classrooms. Children resorted to climbing onto desks if they wanted to move about. Also during writing exercises, teachers threw books at the children because space could not allow them to hand out books to children individually.



Fig 5.6: Indoor space in the top classroom in pre-school J2



Fig 5.7: Indoor space in the baby/middle classroom in pre-school J2



Fig 5.8: Indoor space in the middle/ top classroom in pre-school K1



Fig 5.9: Indoor space in the baby classroom in pre-school K2



Fig 5.10: Indoor space in the middle classroom in pre-school K2

Apart from the two baby classrooms in pre-school K2 that occupied two permanently built rooms, all the buildings in the pre-schools surveyed were long buildings that were partitioned using either plywood or traditional papyrus mats (See Fig 5.11), partitions that went half way up. Some of the partitions were permanently placed (like in pre-school J1, J2, and K1), while others (like in pre-school K2) were temporary and often moved (as both the middle and top classrooms occupied a church hall that was usually used on Saturday's for weddings and other parties). And because of the quality, length and height of the partitioning, there was a lot of noise that distracted both teachers and children. Often teachers had to talk at the top of their voices when conducting lessons and children had to raise their voices when communicating to their teachers or among themselves. I also noticed on many occasions, children being distracted and literally following lessons from other classrooms. This happened especially during singing and counting activities.



Fig 5.11: A papyrus mat dividing the top and baby/middle classrooms in pre-school J2

Because of the limited indoor space (coupled with the widely held views about what and how pre-school children in Uganda ought to learn), classrooms in all the pre-schools surveyed were not arranged into the highly recommended learning areas that are deemed vital in fostering learning and development for this age group (Chapman, 2005). The dominant classroom arrangement comprised of space where children's seats, tables and desks were stationed and space for the teacher and the blackboard at the front of the classroom (See Fig 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, and 5.16). When asked about the importance of classroom set up and children's optimal development, one teacher said 'the set up does not matter here in Uganda' (pre-school K2). This is however contrary to the available body of research, which emphasizes the importance of classroom arrangement to children's optimal development (Lackney, 2000). As pointed out in Chapter Two, well-organized classroom arrangements are a good predictor of children's cognitive and social development. This is because children are given the opportunity to explore their environment, interact with their peers and adults, as well as providing room for children to engage in fantasy play. In the centres visited, it was clear that children were deprived of the opportunity to develop holistically. Thus, there was little room for children to engage in meaningful social interaction especially with their peers.

This was because the way benches were arranged, coupled with the space that was available; children were restricted from moving around freely and hence from mixing with other children.



Fig 5.12: Classroom arrangement in the baby/middle classroom in pre-school J2



Fig 5.13: Classroom arrangement in the top classroom in pre-school J2



Fig 5.14: Classroom arrangement in the middle/top class in pre-school K1



Fig 5.15: Classroom arrangement in the baby classroom in pre-school K2



Fig 5.16: Classroom arrangement in the middle classroom in pre-school K2

There was severe lack of learning/play materials. All the pre-schools visited relied on chalkboards, teacher made wall charts and cards (See Fig 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.20, and 5.21) and children's exercise books.



Fig 5.17: Learning materials hanging at the back of the baby/middle classroom in pre-school J2



Fig 5.18: Learning cards and charts hanging in the middle and at the back in the top classroom in pre-school J2



Fig 5.21 Learning materials in the middle classroom in pre-school K2

When commenting on the prevailing learning environment, one respondent said:

You walk into a pre-primary classroom, you look at the classroom environment and it is too barren like a university lecture room, when actually that particular age group, the environment teaches the child more than the teacher. Now if you have a child in a barren classroom, that child will learn nothing. So no wonder the education is abstract. The child cannot touch things; they cannot interact with real objects (Education psychologist, Kampala).

During this research, there were two main reasons for the lack of learning materials in pre-schools. First, class teachers and head teachers said that things were very expensive to buy. One teacher said ‘we do not have money and play things are very expensive, yet they only last for a short time and then you have to go back and buy more’ (School K1). And because they were costly, schools preferred to keep the few available learning materials in the head teachers' office, hence out of reach of children for fear of them getting spoiled. I asked that if

materials were very expensive why they didn't improvise, given the fact that teachers appeared very good at improvising, judging by the good charts that they had made for classroom display. One teacher said that they cannot use local materials because this would drive parents away, and with this in mind, they only get things that parents will appreciate; manufactured products (School K2).

It was clear in most of the pre-schools that this lack of learning/teaching materials was as a result of under-valuing or under-rating local materials. That is, the idea of using environmentally available resources or 'low cost-no cost' approach had not been adopted in Uganda's ECCE programs. One respondent said that there was a stronger tendency to 'resemble the west by heavily relying on the use of commercially produced materials'. She went on to say that one way in which Uganda could promote the use of 'low cost-no cost' materials in ECCE centres, was to devise means of rating schools; with those using local materials rated highly. But she was careful to add that this would only be achieved if the government became more involved than it is now (Education Specialist, NGO 8).

Secondly, rather than fostering children's learning and development, learning/play materials were seen as things that hindered children's learning. For example when talking to one teacher, she said:

Anti headmistress ayagala tubeere busy all the time. Kati bwakusanga nga muzannya oba abaana nga ba restinga...tabyaagala. Tulina kubeera busy all the time' (meaning 'the head mistress wants us to be busy all the time. Now if she finds you when you are playing with the children or when they are resting, she doesn't like it. We have to be busy all the time') (School K1)

Due to the above, the chalkboard played a central role in children's education. This meant that rather than engaging children in the highly recommended learning that involves touching, smelling, seeing, hearing, and tasting, children were learning from abstract at all times. As a result, children were denied the opportunity to achieve two things: First, children were not given the opportunity to develop ideas and concepts that would help them to understand and make sense of the world around them. And second, children were deprived of the opportunity to develop their meta-cognitive skills which are mainly learned through problem solving as children reflect, question, predict, and hypothesize; as they meaningfully interact with their environment.

With regards to classroom furniture, apart from the baby classrooms in pre-school J1, J2 and all the classrooms in pre-school K2 that had small individual chairs and shared small tables, classroom furniture in the rest of the pre-schools visited comprised long benches and tables attached together. Some of the benches seemed big for the age group of the children (See Fig 5.22). Also, in those classrooms where there were age-appropriate tables and chairs, the fact that children were required to sit for long hours during classroom lessons seemed to make them uncomfortable. Thus because of the unsuitability of some of the classroom furniture, coupled with the fact that children were required to sit for prolonged periods of time, children were constantly restless and generally fidgety. Some children resorted to standing or bending during classroom instruction and writing exercises (See Fig 5.22). Although there has not yet been research carried out in this area, it is most likely that the inappropriateness of classroom furniture and the amount of time that children are required to sit in one place, could lead to the development of poor posture among children. This is because the back muscles, the ligaments and the discs are constantly put under extra stress, as the spine is not in proper alignment. As a result, there is a danger of hurting or spraining children's backs, as well as leading to the shortening or weakening of muscles (Backpain.com, 2007). The restlessness of the children was therefore one way of communicating to adults how uncomfortable and tired they were. But the more the children moved about or stood up, the more their teachers 'ordered' them to sit back on the benches and chairs. In the end, rather than focusing more on learning, discomfort became the children's main focal point.



Fig 5.22: Classroom furniture in the baby classroom in pre-school K1

Concerning approach to discipline, beating was frequently used as a means of ‘disciplining’ children regardless of age. Teachers in all the pre-schools visited walked about with sticks ready to beat a child who misbehaved. Teachers never talked through with the child what he or she had done. Instead, children were called and smacked at any time and anywhere on the body. In pre-school J1 in the middle class, I noticed one child being beaten on the head with a stick by the teacher, for apparently ripping a number chart. In pre-school K1 in the middle/top class, it was writing time and the teacher picked one child to help distribute pencils to the whole class. But after giving out pencils to only the children on her desk, child M sat down and started doing her writing exercise in her exercise book. When the teacher realized that child M had not done as she was told, the teacher reacted by pulling child M’s book away from her and threw it across the classroom, and pulling one of her ears. The teacher then ordered child M to ‘quickly’ distribute the pencils to all the children in the classroom. In pre-school K2 in the top class, the head teacher walked in the room and noticed that two children had taken their socks and shoes off. She angrily ordered the children to stand on top of a table and she hit their bare toes with a stick. In essence, teachers were ‘reacting’ to children’s ‘bad’ behaviour instead of ‘responding’ (talking to the child and showing him or her why what he or she had done was wrong) to it. Also it was common practice for teachers to encourage

children to punish each other in their presence. This was witnessed in pre-schools J2 and K1. In Pre-school J2 for example, child A hit child B on the wrist. Child B responded by reporting child A to the teacher. The teacher called child A and asked him why he had hit child B. Before child A could answer, the teacher told child B to hit child A, which child B did by slapping child A across the face. Also in pre-school K1, I witnessed child H grabbing a pencil off child G. When the teacher noticed that child G was crying, she called and asked child G what had happened. The teacher then called child H, and without asking child H what had happened, the teacher told child G to box child H, which child G did by boxing child H in the back three times.

By encouraging children to hit back those who hit them, teachers were showing children that this was how conflicts should be resolved. In fact I noticed on many occasions children hitting back those who hit or those who simply annoyed them without reporting to the teacher. Thus, children were not being educated that conflicts or misunderstandings could be settled through peaceful means (for example an apology). Teachers were encouraging violence, a thing that could be very harmful to society. This is because as discussed earlier in Chapter Two, children who experience beatings, slapping or hitting are much more likely to become aggressive themselves. Such frequent beatings were also discouraging children from coming to nursery schools. For example, the teacher in pre-school J3 recalled an incident in which two brothers were physically punished by the head teacher for apparently coming to school late. The next day the two boys did not come to school and their uncle came and informed their teacher that the boys did not want to come back to the school because they were beaten. As another teacher rightly observed, ‘the love of the teacher brings children to school’ (pre-school K3). This means that if teachers are not ‘loving’ or ‘friendly’, children do not see the ‘reason’ for coming to school, a thing that would be harmful in the long-run by negatively affecting children’s attitude towards the whole issue of ‘schooling’.

The teacher/child relationship was quite tense in all the pre-schools surveyed. Teachers held the upper hand in everything, and literally children had no say. That is, children had to follow and do what the teacher wanted at all times, and they were punished if they did not do so. In pre-school J1 in the middle class for example, one child excitedly brought her neatly done work to show to the teacher. But unfortunately, the child had not followed the teacher’s instructions. Instead of writing her name, the date, the month and the year on the half page on

the left hand side of the book and the class work on the full page on the right hand side of the book, the child had done the opposite. The teacher responded by angrily rubbing all of the work and ordered the child to re-do the work. In pre-school K1 in the middle/top class, it was time for the children to copy in their books numbers 1-10 and their words (for example 1-one, 8-eight). One particular child was struggling to write the number words although he had managed to write most of the numbers. The teacher came to this particular child and said to her '*ebintu obimanyi naye wesiruwaza. Nja kkusuna* (Meaning 'you know how to do the work but you are just acting stupid. I will pinch you'). This particular child tried to do the work but she was trembling with fear knowing that she will be further punished should she fail to do the work correctly. In the same classroom, a child failed to write number three correctly and the teacher punched him twice in the back. The teacher then ordered the child to show her the number three on the number chart in the classroom. The child correctly pointed to number three and the teacher said to him 'now write the correct number three in your book'. The child still failed, and the teacher turned to me and said '*kano akaana kali naturally kasiru*' (meaning 'this child is naturally stupid'). Also, during classroom activities, teachers rarely joked with the children, it was 'serious work' all the time. In some classes, children were never praised if they answered a question right. This was witnessed in pre-school J1 and K1. It was also rare for children to get a one-to-one attention from their teachers. In addition, teachers rarely comforted children when they were in distress. For example a teacher in school K2 walked in the classroom and found a child crying. The teacher looked at the child and said '*kale ono akabiraki?*' (Meaning- 'now what is she crying for'). The teacher then walked away without asking the child what had happened to her. Teacher-child interaction witnessed in the schools visited was therefore contrary to the existing body of research which points to the positive benefits of a warm and relaxed interaction to children's development. Such interaction therefore was negatively impacting on children's social development as it was most likely to lead to poor psychological attachments, poor social competence and poor pro-social behavior, all of which are vital for later learning (Kesner, 2000: Yoon, 2002).

The teacher/child ratio differed from pre-school to pre-school but it was generally high. In pre-school J1, teacher child ratio was 1:50 in the baby class, 1:40 in the middle class, and 1:37 in the top class. In Pre-school J2, the ratio was 1:37 in the combined baby/middle class, and 1:35 in the top class, while in pre-school J3 the teacher child ratio was 1:9. In pre-school K1, teacher child ratio was 1:16 in the baby classroom and 1:40 in the combined middle/top classroom. In pre-school K2, the ratio was 1:31 in the baby classroom, 1:38 in the middle

class, and 1:25 in the top classroom. Because of the big number of children to each teacher in most of the classrooms (apart from the baby classroom in pre-school J3 which had the lowest ratio of 1:9), I noticed that teachers were struggling to appropriately manage classrooms. After standing for some minutes and looking at the chaos that was taking place in her class, the middle/top class teacher in pre-school K2 (who had 40 children in her classroom) turned to me and said:

I can feel my head spinning! Can you imagine handling forty children on my own!
Sometimes I feel like quitting!

In pre-school J1, J2, K1 and K2, children often hit each other, climbed on top of desks, chairs and tables and shouted on top of their voices. As a result, teachers used restrictive and controlling measures towards children. For example on top of spanking, it was common practice for teachers in pre-school J1, K1 and K2 to ‘order’ children to sit down and put their heads on top of desks. Such strategies were used by the teachers in order to restore ‘calm’ to the classrooms. Also because of big teacher/child ratios, there was no small group or individualized approach to teaching in pre-school J1, J2, K1, and K2, apart from pre-school J3 which had the lowest teacher/child ratio of 1:9. Teachers employed the use of whole classroom instruction. Big teacher/child ratios therefore, denied children the much needed individualized care, attention, and emotional security, all of which are essential to their learning and overall development.

All the pre-schools visited regardless of the location or type of provider did not have a well-defined curriculum. Teachers had to make up their own curriculum as they went along; relying on knowledge they gained from training colleges, guidance from friends and ‘any’ book that they considered to be ‘good for the children’. Teachers in pre-schools J2, K1 and K2 said that because there was no guidance on which reference books to use, they were forced to sometimes borrow reference books from primary school teachers. One teacher in pre-school J2 said that she actually used schemes of work that she got from her friend who was teaching primary one and primary two. The curriculum therefore was rigid, subject centred (covering subjects like English, Numbers, Reading, Religious studies, and Social studies), and academically oriented. Children were being taught things that were beyond their age. But surprisingly regardless of the absence of a common curriculum, all the pre-schools surveyed had the same expectations and teaching content for the different age groups. For example,

children aged between three and four years were taught and expected to count and write numbers up to 20, while 5-6 year olds were expected to know and write numbers 1-100 (including their words), all the letters of the alphabet, as well as being able to write short sentences like ‘this is a cup’.

When I commented on the possibility of the content being too academic, teachers in all the pre-school surveyed said that they were being forced to do so because of parents’ expectations and demands. One teacher in pre-school J1 added:

Because parents are academically oriented, they want their children to be able to read, write, and count numbers’ (pre-school J1)

While another teacher went on to say:

Unless parents are educated on the issue of early childhood development and what they ought to expect their children to learn at this age, teachers will continue to force children to learn things they are not ready for (pre-school K2)

When talking about the same issue with the head teacher in pre-school K1, she said that she and the teachers had tried to talk to parents about the dangers of having high expectations from their children, but if the school does not ‘deliver’ what parents want, parents resort to getting teachers from other nursery schools to coach their children after school. The headmistress went on to say that what parents aimed at was to prepare children for good points at primary seven, a thing that ‘guaranteed’ them a place in a good secondary school while also increasing chances of such children to qualify for university. Because of this, children were put under enormous pressure to learn, and literally education was a ‘race’ for these children. Thus the perception was that those children who start academic work early were more likely to finish ahead of those who did not.

In addition to an extremely academic curriculum, the approach to teaching in all the pre-schools surveyed was highly teacher-centred. Teacher directed activities dominated 99 percent of a child’s school day as it was up to the teacher to decide how, when, where and what children learned. For example I noticed that it was common practice for the teacher to walk in the classroom in the morning and decide which rhymes children were to sing. And as

soon as the singing finished, the teacher introduced the first lesson of the day. This was followed by practising the lesson by all the children one by one. After, the children had to do the same lesson in their respective exercise books. But because learning was extrinsic and based on 'rote' (defined by the Webster dictionary as 'to fix in memory by means of frequent repetition') some children still failed to do the work correctly in their books. Such children were verbally abused, physically beaten or were denied the opportunity go out for break time until they had finished doing their work. In the middle classroom in pre-school J1 for example, it was time for the children to copy numbers from the blackboard into their respective exercise books. I noticed one child struggling to copy the work into her book. The teacher came, looked at this particular child's work and shouted 'I said write! Can't you see what is written on the blackboard?' Despite several attempts, this particular child 'failed' to do the work as the teacher had wanted. The teacher responded by pulling the exercise book away from the child and hitting her on the head with the book. I asked this particular teacher what she does if she tries but children still fail. She answered 'I make them write until they are able'. In the middle/top class in pre-school K2, the children were given an exercise to write the missing numbers 1-50. But despite the children practising writing the numbers on the blackboard one by one several times before they were told to write the work in their respective books, some children still could not do the exercise correctly. One child in particular got only a few numbers right. After watching from a distance for some minutes, the teacher approached this particular child and angrily asked him 'where were you and in which class?' (Meaning in which school and what class was the child previously). The child answered 'baby'. The teacher then pulled this particular child's lips and turned to me and said '*abazadde abamu batwaala abaana mu nursery nga beebaka bwebasi na kuzanya nga tebawandiika*' (Meaning 'some parents take their children in nursery schools where they just sleep and play, with little emphasis on writing'). Because learning was highly teacher centred, children were not at all given any opportunity to 'discover and learn'. Also, children did not have room to express themselves; their opinions were not respected; and it was 'sin' for a child to challenge a teacher. When commenting on this approach to teaching, one respondent said:

There is a lot of fear. The teacher is up there; she knows everything. The child is an empty container who is supposed to be filled. So they (the teachers) use empty tin or empty container approach to education where the teacher is the source of all information...you simply (meaning the child), you are supposed to receive

knowledge. You are not supposed to generate it... It is extremely theoretical... It is a little bit terrorising. Children have to be made to enjoy learning rather than just tolerating it. Learning has to be pleasurable; it has to be enjoyed. Learning which is enjoyable has a more lasting impression on the child's mind than one, which is just tolerated...you are likely to remember something that excited you. So similarly, the more interesting something is the more likely the child will remember it and remember it for life (Education Psychologist).

The rigid approach to teaching was therefore not giving children a chance to develop individually; a chance to be the best they could be whatever their talent or background. Children were not given chance to enjoy childhood; to do things in their own ability. Thus although the teacher-child approach to teaching was seen by many as the 'pathway to excellence', it was actually the 'betrayal of excellence'. This is because rather than 'engaging' children in their learning, children were being 'disengaged'. Yet such 'disengagement' has been highly associated with low academic achievements, school dropout and poor future learning and work prospects (Black, 2004). Both educators and researchers acknowledge that the only way to achieve excellence that is recognised, is through personalised learning that is responsive to the different ways students achieve their best (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). Such learning intrinsically motivates children by helping them to 'meaningfully' explore the world around them.

With regards to assessment, in all the pre-schools and regardless of age, children were assessed at the end of every lesson and at the end of every term by doing written work. Assessment was therefore what could be termed as 'standardized' 'pencil and paper' or 'formal' and not the highly recommended informal authentic assessment for this age group (Education For All Global Monitoring Report, 2005; Katz, 2000; Hill, 1992). This type of assessment focused only on isolated evidence of children's achievements and development. Thus, rather than holistic assessment that caters for all domains that are vital for children's optimal learning and development like emotional personal and social development, language development and physical development, children were required to sit for written exams at the end of every term (See Appendix Four for a sample of end of term exams), exams that only focused on academic achievement in subjects like Mathematics, English and Social Science. Commenting on the issue one respondent said:

The assessment in Uganda is on reading, writing...everything to do with book. A child is looked at as an academic, 'intellectual organism'. The present provision...is more on book rather than holistic' (Education Psychologist).

The use of formal assessment meant that children's differences were not catered for as all children regardless of their age and ability had to sit one standard exam as set for the entire classroom. This was because at every stage, all children had to perform up to a 'set' level if they were to be promoted to another class.

Language of instruction was English rather than a child's mother tongue. Because of competition among nursery schools and in Uganda's education system as a whole, the parents expected teachers, to 'make' children speak English. Children were constantly being punished and reminded that they were not allowed to speak their mother tongue on pre-school premises. In the middle/top classroom in pre-school J1 for example, one child reported to the teacher 'teacher, *ono alina eppesa lyange*' (Meaning 'teacher X has taken my button'). The teacher angrily replied 'ah, ah, vernacular in my class! Don't use vernacular in my class'. In the baby class in school K1 during an English lesson, the teacher showed the children a picture of a rat and asked them in English what it was called. One child shouted excitedly in her mother tongue '*Mmese*' (meaning 'rat'). The teacher angrily said to this particular child and then to the whole class 'it is called rat not *Mmese* okay'. And in the baby classroom in pre-school K2 one child was talking to another in vernacular (Luganda) and the teacher rebuked the two children by saying to them:

'Who is speaking vernacular? I don't want vernacular in my class' She went on and asked the whole class 'where do you speak vernacular?' and all the children replied 'at home'.

But what puzzled me, and probably the children, was that the teachers used vernacular with each other and during classroom instruction. Thus the very language that the children were being punished for using on the pre-school compounds was the very language that the teachers were freely using anytime and anywhere. When asked why children were punished for using their mother tongue, all the teachers in the schools visited said that it was because parents wanted their children to speak English. To most parents, it was a big 'privilege' if their children spoke English well. Therefore, children were being beaten for speaking their

mother tongue in school compounds, and parents were questioning the type of education their children were being given if they did not speak English. One head teacher said that parents would remove their children from centres if they did not speak English well. This is because, she said, parents were always comparing their children with ‘their neighbour’s child or with children from other pre-schools’ (School K1). But to some, the issue was not about parents’ demands, but ECCE centres were simply following a legacy that was left behind; the type of education that was engineered by the colonial masters. As one respondent put it, ‘the colonial era left us with that scar’. And he went on to say, ‘white-collar jobs- *ye namutta wa Africa* (meaning white collar jobs is the killer of Africa) (District official 4). In essence, the colonial legacy of ‘elitism’ or the ‘educated class’, was forcing parents to prepare their children right from pre-school for a ‘status’ in society. There was concern therefore, that putting emphasis on English as the ‘trendy’ language, was simply doing more harm than good to indigenous languages. District official 4 went on to say that ‘languages will die because there is no one to carry them on’. This concern is in line with the available literature as discussed in Chapter Two, that the mother tongue is very fragile at this stage. And because of this, if children are discouraged from practising and hence master their mother tongue, they are most likely to lose it altogether.

But although children were being instructed in English in pre-schools, it was a different case in lower primary schools. According to the new primary school curriculum known as the Thematic Curriculum, children from primary one to primary three must be taught in their mother tongue. This was confusing to the many children who pass through pre-schooling prior to starting formal schooling. One teacher told me about her daughter who spoke English well and was very bright before she joined primary one. But because she was instructed in Luganda (her mother tongue), when it came to sitting for exams, she got zero in all the subjects. This was because she could neither understand nor express herself in Luganda. Commenting on the same issue, one government official said:

It is a contradiction if we use English in nursery schools and then when it comes to primary schools, the government says that mother tongue must be used. Yet children have been started off being instructed in English (District official 5).

It was indeed a contradiction as the teacher’s example given above shows how children are struggling to cope because they are not used to being instructed in their mother tongue. When

it comes to the subject of language therefore, ECCE is not helping in preparing children for primary schooling.

Concerning the issue of daily classroom routines, children were subjected to tight daily schedules. This meant that class work dominated 99% of the school day. Children were taught for more than two hours non-stop. In pre-school J1 for example, school started at 8.00 am, and between 8.20am and 8.40 am, all the children had to line up outside the building for the morning assembly. Classroom lessons started as soon as the assembly finished at 8.45 am or 8.50am up to 10.40 am and sometimes up to 11.10am when it was snack time. As soon as snack time was over and usually lasted 30 minutes, it was time for more classroom work until 12.00 when it was time for the children to go home. This was the same pattern in pre-school J2, J3 and K1 and K2. Although the timetables differed from pre-school to pre-school, the daily routines were divided into time for class-work for the greater part of the day and children got only 30 minutes break. Lessons usually lasted on average forty minutes and in most centres, children did not get a break in between lessons as teachers taught one subject after another. For some children, lessons started as soon as they were dropped off to school in the morning before the official start of the school day. In pre-school K2 in the baby class for example, the teacher told me that because some parents have to be at work as early as 7.30 am, some children were in school by 7.00am. And as soon as the children came in, the teacher started giving them work, which meant that by the time lessons officially started, some children had already done most of the day's class work. And for those children who had finished the day's planned class work, they were most likely to be given the next day's planned class work. And for other children, class work did not stop at the official end of the school day. In pre-school K1 in the middle/top class for example, those children that were not picked up at 12.30 (which was officially the end of the school day) were given the next day's work.

When asked why children were given work before the official start of the school day or after the official end of the school day, the teachers said that they were forced to do so because of the amount of work that they were expected to cover during the school term. This approach however, meant that children were constantly 'working', yet as the saying goes 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'. There was a lot of pressure put on the children to sit still for hours while engaging in academic lessons. Thus, the dominance of the school day by over-scheduled adult-led activities made children tired, and hence they reacted in different ways: I

noticed that some children fell asleep in the middle of lessons, some were inattentive or day dreamt and generally did not at all follow what the teachers were teaching, while others resorted to fighting each other and on the whole being unruly. And because tasks did not match their abilities and interests, children were unable to focus on what was being taught. All of the above meant that the teachers' goal of 'teaching' was altogether missed, as children were not able to consolidate what was being taught.

Health and safety was not given the attention it deserved in the schools visited due to the location of some schools, approach to hygiene, and general lack of health and safety policies. For example, although it had a secure gate, pre-school J1 was located in the same gate and compound as a boy's hostel. This in itself was unsafe especially for children in case there was a paedophile among the residents or workers in the hostel. Pre-school J2 was not fenced off and it shared the same compound with workers' quarters (houses), hence providing easy access to strangers, while also making it easy for children to wonder off the school compounds. The head teacher in pre-school J2 recalled an incident in which a parent brought her child to the school for the first time. But as soon as the parent had left, the child escaped from school and went looking for his mum. When the head teacher as well as all the teachers realized what had happened, they looked for the child, but the child was nowhere to be seen. The head teacher had to contact the child's family to inform them that their child had gone missing. The search continued into the afternoon. And because the child had strayed miles away from the school, it was one member of the public that found him distressed, and the uniform helped the stranger to tell which pre-school this particular child went to. The member of the public took the child back to school from where his parents came and collected him. Also, the playground surface in pre-school K1 was made of concrete, which meant that if children fell, they could severely hurt themselves (See Fig 5.23 below).



Fig 5.23: A concrete playground in pre-school K2

In addition, pre-schools did not demand immunization records on admission of children to their schools. When asked why there was no strict policy concerning this issue, one head teacher said that it was difficult because parents viewed them as teachers and not ‘nurses’ (School J2). And because of this, head teachers had no ‘right’ to ask parents to present immunization certificates. Yet according to this head teacher, partly because of ignorance, some parents did not have their children get all the appropriate immunizations. This meant that those children that were not vaccinated were susceptible to diseases and could easily pass germs around in the centres.

Concerning sanitation, although both boys and girls were provided with separate toilets and water for washing their hands, soap was not provided in all the pre-schools visited. Yet ECCE centres are an ideal instructional place to teach proper hand washing to children. It is at this age that children are learning to independently use the toilet and clean their bottoms. By not providing them with soap therefore, it meant that although water could help to remove visible dirt from their hands, it would not help in reducing the spread of harmful microorganisms that could be harmful to children’s health and development. This is why it is highly recommended by medical experts that soap and water (especially warm water) should always be used.

And lastly, schools did not have an explicit policy on involving parents in their children’s

education, as well as the community. But on the whole parents were involved in their children's education in one way or another. In pre-school J1, parents were involved in their children's education through open days, sports days, homework that children took home at the end of every school day and the school sending newsletters at home to parents. In pre-school J2, parents were involved mainly through children taking work home and through newsletters. In school J3, parents were involved through parents' meetings as well as visitation days for nursery school children who were in the boarding section. In pre-school K1, parents could informally discuss their children's school performance with the teachers when they dropped or picked their children from school, but this was entirely dependent on each parent's initiative. And in pre-school K2, parents were involved through helping children with their homework and also through open days that were held twice in a year. But despite the importance of parental involvement, some teachers and headmistresses felt that it was not always easy to involve parents and hence keep them up to date with their children's performance. Some parents were generally reluctant with an attitude of '*yiyo yiko kazi ya wa*' (Meaning 'that is your job') (Teacher, school J2) while other parents did not appreciate teachers' honesty concerning their children's performance. Commenting on the latter, another teacher said:

It is difficult to provide parents with the truth about their children, and because of this, we find ourselves sharing with parents only 'good' information about their children for fear of negative reaction from them (School K2)

This particular teacher went on to say that some parents did not want to hear that their child was not doing well. If they were told so, they blamed the teachers for not doing their job well. Because of such reactions, some schools had chosen not to encourage parental involvement although not openly. In pre-school K1 for example, a teacher said that even though some parents wanted to get involved, the leadership of the school did not encourage it. This was because according to the top management, some parents 'became a nuisance' as a result. But overall, teachers and Headmistresses of the schools visited acknowledged the importance of parental involvement. One teacher said 'if parents know what children are doing at school they can see how to help their children' (School J2). While one head teacher said that 'Parental involvement helps parents to know the importance of pre-schooling especially if parents are illiterate' (School J1). On the other hand, in all the pre-schools visited, the community was not at all involved.

Summary

Research findings in this chapter reveal that seventeen years on since Jomtien, there has hardly been any ‘tangible’ improvement in the quality of ECCE provision in Jinja and Kampala Districts. Thus although the districts were different culturally, quality in ECCE provision did not markedly differ. Children were being educated in environments that are far from conducive; spaces are limited, learning materials are poor, classroom schedules are tight, teacher-centred approach is widely used to teaching children, the ‘curriculum’ is highly academic, teacher/child relationship is unfavorable, and formal assessment is widely used to evaluate children’s learning and development. Yet as mentioned in Chapter Four, Kampala and Jinja Districts were chosen due to the fact that they are the oldest, leading and strategically placed districts in Uganda. Given their position in Uganda both politically and economically therefore, research findings in Kampala and Jinja Districts could help to project the present pattern of ECCE provision in Uganda. Thus despite the international community’s involvement in terms of defining what quality in ECCE entails, funding, coupled with Uganda’s ‘pledge’ to fulfilling the first of the six goals of EFA, tangible change in the operational life of pre-schools has hitherto not happened.

Evidently, the present quality in ECCE provision in Jinja and Kampala Districts is not helping children to become inquisitive, excited, confident, and involved learners; things that are vital in producing adaptable and innovative future adults (Calman, 2005). This is because rather than ‘engaging’ children in their learning, children are instead being ‘disengaged’. Children are not being intrinsically motivated to learn as they are not given the opportunity to ‘meaningfully’ and ‘freely’ explore the world around them. Given the importance of quality in ECCE provision to children’s overall learning and development as well as a country’s economic, social, and political prospects, findings in this Chapter reveal that as a nation, Uganda could be at risk of producing a less productive and a less secure society for her future.

In essence, the present chapter has helped to show the extent to which quality is still ‘lacking’ in ECCE provision in Jinja and Kampala Districts. But certainly, such problems have root causes. The next chapter (Chapter Six) therefore, is devoted to presenting findings on the key research question as to why even with government commitment to institutional/ ministerial changes and international donor support, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems?

CHAPTER SIX

Factors that have continued to impact upon quality and accessibility in Early Childhood Care and Education provision in Uganda

Introduction

Chapter Five presented research findings on the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda and its effect on children's overall learning and development. Findings showed that children are still being educated in environments that are far from conducive. All the pre-schools surveyed in Jinja and Kampala Districts possessed the same characteristics that included:

- The use of a teacher centred-chalk talk approach to teaching;
- Classroom arrangements that were likened to a 'university lecture room';
- Severe lack of learning/teaching materials;
- High teacher-child ratio;
- The use of English as the medium of instruction;
- Great emphasis put on academic work such as Maths, English and writing rather than children's overall development;
- The use of formal assessment to 'track' children's learning and development;
- Limited space both indoors and outdoors;
- Approach to discipline involving the application of physical pain ranging from slapping, pinching, pulling of ears and hair, and beatings using sticks.

The key question of this research is as to why even with government commitment to institutional/ ministerial changes and international donor support, ECCE is an area of education still riven with problems? The task of this research therefore, was to 'dig out' factors that have continued to contribute to the underdevelopment of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision, factors both internal and external to Uganda. Through individual interviews with 5 heads of pre-schools, 16 teachers, 4 parents of children who attend some form of pre-schooling, 2 parents of children who do not attend any ECCE program, 3 local government members, 7 ECCE teacher training directors and tutors, 9 central government officials, and 8 national and international NGO representatives in Uganda, it emerged that a combination of economic, socio-cultural, physical, as well as political factors were responsible. This chapter therefore discusses such factors in detail, focusing on their nature

and implications at school, local, regional, national and international levels, and the broader political social, economic and physical contexts.

Contributory factors at various levels

The pre-school level

At the pre-school level, there was no requirement in place for managers to be adequately qualified as a prerequisite for obtaining a licence to run a pre-school. In all the ECCE centres surveyed, only one manager had undergone ECCE teacher and managerial training. The rest of the managers were either former primary school teachers, or were persons trained as ECCE teachers rather than ECCE managers. Yet as mentioned in Chapter Two, adequately trained managers are the driving force behind attaining quality ECCE provision. Training not only helps them attain professional ethics, but it also provides them with contextual knowledge and expertise. These in turn equip them with appropriate skills they need to run an ECCE centre with a great deal of effectiveness. Commenting on the importance of ECCE teacher and managerial training, one director and tutor said that although when training as primary school teachers they learn a little bit about infant methods,

This is not adequate to guarantee primary teachers to handle pre-school children
(Director and tutor, Teacher training institution 4, Jinja District)

She went on to say:

It was not until I took up this course (ECCE) for one year, that I realised that the infant method was not enough

In all nursery schools visited, there was no mission statement that was geared towards ECCE provision, no aims of provision, and no development plan. Where ECCE classes were attached to primary schools, it was one mission statement that catered for both sections (nursery and primary). Because of lack of training by the heads of schools, there was little evidence of a carefully planned strategy aimed at helping children to optimally learn and develop.

Just as managers, teachers are also an important factor in the provision of quality ECCE. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, among the things that help teachers to offer quality services included: the knowledge and skills that they possess in the area of ECCE as a result

of training, work commitment which is as a result of good working conditions, adequate teacher/child ratio, availability of teaching materials, availability of space, and general attitude towards work. In the schools that I visited, some or all of the above were either inadequate or missing.

Firstly, although most of the ECCE centres in Jinja and Kampala District employed ‘trained’ teachers, these teachers were either grade three (primary school) teachers, or they were ECCE ‘trained’ but had not graduated from accredited teacher training colleges. According to one respondent, such teachers were working in centres with minimal specialized education in ECCE, and with little knowledge beyond level four (Senior Four) of secondary education (Education psychologist). And although there were many training colleges that were mushrooming all ‘training’ nursery school teachers, some colleges were described as ‘unsatisfactory’. This was because according to a number of informants, each college was doing what they felt like doing; some trained teachers for one year, while others trained them for one and half years; some had resources, while others were ‘barely surviving’ (Education Psychologist; Director-ECCD teacher training institution 4, Kampala District). As a result, ‘teachers that were qualifying were of very low standard’, said one respondent (Education psychologist). When I visited some teacher training institutions in Jinja and Kampala Districts, it became clear as to why the above respondents described ECCE teacher training colleges as they did. I observed that:

- There was lack of ECCE trained tutors as most of them had grade three, diploma or degree qualifications in other fields other than ECCE;
- There was lack of a common syllabus, which meant that each institution came up with its own; a thing that impacted upon the quality of ECCE teachers. One tutor said that some training institutions not only taught nursery school courses to would be nursery school teachers, but trainees can take more than one course such as catering, tailoring, alongside the ECCE course, all lasting for one year. To her, this affected the quality of teachers who qualified because training was not concentrated on ECCE;
- There was lack of instructional materials which meant that trainers were forced to train would be ECCE teachers theory rather than practical ways of working in an ECCE program;
- There was absence of a clear government policy on running teacher-training institutions. And because of this, everybody ran it any way they wanted;

- Training institutions were rarely inspected with no follow-up of results;
- The length of training varied from one college to another. For example some colleges trained ECCE certificates on a part time basis; trainees were expected to come to college at 2.00 pm and leave at 5.00pm for the whole duration of the course. One tutor said that she found the duration of the course too short for her to cover all the course units (Teacher training institution 6, Kampala District);
- Some training institutions did not have demonstration pre-schools (Pre-schools attached to ECCE teacher training colleges used as practice schools for would-be ECCE teachers).

What I also observed was that the way teachers were trained in these colleges, did not differ from the approach they used in the field. This meant that rather than being forced to adopt a teacher centred approach to teaching by their bosses in the field, as one tutor claimed, it was the very approach that they were being taught when training as teachers. This was clear when I visited demonstration classrooms in some of the colleges. The set up was the same as that I had witnessed in the pre-schools I visited (See Fig 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3)). Other than the chalkboard, the teacher made charts and children's exercise books, there were no learning materials in all the classrooms (See Fig 6.4 and 6.5). Thus even in demonstration pre-schools, it was the teacher who was at the centre of children's learning.



Fig 6.1: Classroom set up in the baby classroom in a demonstration school



Fig 6.2: Classroom set up in the middle classroom in a demonstration school



Fig 6.3: Classroom set up in the top classroom in a demonstration school



Fig 6.4: Class work written on the black board in the baby classroom in a demonstration school



Fig 6.5: Class work written on the black board in the middle classroom in a demonstration school

When expressing my concern about the approach to teacher training, one tutor said that she too was uncomfortable with the approach because according to her, it fostered ‘what was actually the bad approach to teaching children’. And that although as a person she was willing to change the approach, she admitted that it would be a hard thing to achieve since it is the kind of approach that the market dictated.

Secondly, in addition to inadequate teacher training, poor work commitment affected teacher quality mainly due to lack of job satisfaction. In the pre-schools that were visited, teacher commitment was affected by a number of factors. These included inadequate pay, lack of professional recognition, long hours of work, high teacher/child ratio, inadequate classroom space, lack of continuous professional development, absence of a career ladder, and the choice of career. Such factors were adversely affecting their devotion to providing quality education to children under their care. I will look at these factors in more detail.

Regarding salaries, teachers that were interviewed said that compensation was not sufficient. Commenting on the issue, one teacher said, ‘I just bear’ (School J1), while another said ‘am just enduring’ (School K2). Some teachers put the blame of poor compensation on ‘greedy bosses’ who ‘only mind about themselves’. One teacher said ‘bosses cheat teachers. For

example children pay 150,000 Uganda shillings every term, but teachers are paid only 60,000 Uganda shillings a month' She added '*Ba bosses be bafuna. Bavuga amamotoka amalungi* (meaning 'it is the bosses that are benefiting. They drive posh cars'). This particular teacher said that this drives her into offering low quality education and care, because of the attitude '*sifuna mu boss wange yafuna* (meaning- 'I don't gain, it is my boss who gains') (School K2). Other teachers put the blame on the government, which according to them, did not care at all about them. One teacher said 'if the government cared about us, they should have put a salary scale or top up what we are paid by our employers. But because there is no law concerning our salaries, our bosses pay us whatever and whenever they feel like' (School K1). Teachers claimed that sometimes they were not paid for four or five months in a row. And that what some bosses did was to disappear from the school when it was payday.

Because of insufficient salaries, one teacher said that although she loved her job, she could not give a hundred percent to children under her care when her children are at home because of lack of school fees. This particular teacher said that she was paid 50,000 shillings a month (an equivalent of less than twenty pounds), and sometimes she was not paid consistently or not at all. She went on to say that ECCE 'teachers have nobody to go to and complain, and they are frustrated ...their heart is not on what they do' (School K1).

Furthermore, teachers felt that they were not accorded the recognition they deserved. To many teachers, this adversely affected their commitment to working with children. They said that people did not recognise their work, yet the job was so hectic, a lot of tolerance and perseverance was needed, and that generally it 'cost a lot of time to teach children'. And because of all that it takes to be an Early Childhood Educator, teachers said that they ought to be recognised because they played a very important role. One teacher said 'we are the foundation. If the foundation is not good, children cannot do well later' (School K2). This 'under-recognition' the teachers said, came from the parents, their fellow teachers who were trained at higher levels, and the general public. On the side of parents, one teacher said 'very few parents appreciate nursery school teachers. Most believe that we just play with children, they do not value our input' (School J2). While another teacher said, 'parents do not appreciate us but they see only mistakes. For example if a child is playing and gets hurt, the parent comes and shouts at you, asking what you were doing' (School K2). Some teachers said that parents abused them in front of children at school or talked bad about them at home, which in turn affected the children's respect for their teachers. One teacher said that one-day a

child came to school and told her '*mummy ame sema ame kyoka na wewe*' (meaning 'mummy said she is tired of you') (School J2). Concerning other teachers, nursery school teachers expressed concern that they were despised by teachers who were primary or secondary school trained. One teacher said:

Primary school teachers see themselves as above us. You can see this when we meet. Nursery teachers sit in one corner, and those that are not nursery teachers, sit in another corner and talk to each other (School K1)

With the general public, teachers felt that they were 'despised' and 'judged'. They said that the public viewed them as people whose job was only to 'play, and to wipe children's noses' (Schools J1 and K2). Because of the attitude towards the profession, teachers said that they become de-motivated.

Concerning hours of work, the number of hours that some teachers were expected to work affected their 'productivity'. Some of the trained teachers interviewed said that one of the things that motivated them to train as nursery school teachers was the fact that children attended for half a day. But almost all expressed the problem of the hours that their bosses expect them to stay in school. In one school, children were dropped off at school as early as 7.00-7.30am because parents had to rush to work. This meant that some teachers had to be at school before seven o'clock. And because some children stayed all day, it meant that teachers did not leave work until after 6.00pm (School K2). In another school, teachers were meant to be at school by 7.30 am. And although all children attended only half day up to 12.30 pm, teachers were required to remain at school until 5.15pm. In this particular school, teachers were expected to report to school even during holidays, for the entire holiday period. The only holiday that they were not required to report to school was December holidays (school J2). In most schools, teachers were meant to report to school even when they were not feeling well. Teachers said that such working conditions made them 'work tirelessly', a thing that greatly affected the quality of their services to children. One teacher said 'how can I teach well if I did not sleep well'. While another said 'sometimes I just come because I have to' (School K2).

High teacher/child ratio was also affecting teacher quality. The available literature acknowledges the relationship between the effectiveness of the teacher and the number of children under that particular teacher (Saluja *et al.*, 2002; Espinosa, 2002). This was

confirmed during this study, in that the greater the number of children that a teacher had, the poorer the quality of teaching and learning. In classes where the teacher/child ratio was low (for example in pre-school J3), there was relaxed teacher/child interaction, one to one tutoring, child centred activities and relaxed approach to discipline (talking to the child as opposed to smacking). While in classes where the teacher/child ratio was high (for example in pre-school J1, J2, K1 and K2), teachers used structured teaching all the time, teachers rarely talked to children when chastening them, teachers walked about the classroom with a stick from the start to the end of the school day, and teachers shouted at children a lot even without apparent reason. Out of frustration, one teacher said 'Putting many children in my class makes me hate my job. I am so overworked' (School K2). Another teacher said:

I think it is very unfair for the head mistress to expect me to handle 40 children on my own. I really could do with some help. I feel I am fed up' (Teacher, Middle Classroom, Pre-school K1)

In all the classrooms with big teacher/child ratios, there was a clear indication that teachers were put under enormous stress; a thing that affected their performance.

Small classrooms or inadequate space was also affecting teacher quality. The strain of handling big numbers of children in very small rooms was clearly visible on teachers' faces. Most classrooms were divided in such a way that teachers were almost confined to their little space near the blackboard. And because desks were so squeezed together, teachers could hardly access children beyond the first or second rows of benches. Teachers said that given the inadequate space coupled with the number of children in the rooms, their morale to work with children was wearing out. Also, limited space made it difficult for teachers to change classroom set up, a thing that is highly recommended in the early years if children's enthusiasm to learn is to be kept burning. One teacher said 'children sit in the same place year after year, which adversely affects children's learning' (pre-school J2). Worse still, some classrooms operated in multi-purpose halls, which were used for various activities especially on weekends. This meant that if the hall was to be used on a Saturday, teachers had to move all their stuff out, and then put everything back again on a Monday. This was very 'tiresome' expressed one teacher (pre-school K2).

Lack of continuous professional development also affected teachers' attitude towards their work. Teachers complained that they felt they were totally excluded by the whole system.

This was because those teachers who were teaching other levels had access to workshops and seminar. ECCE teachers said that workshops that took place were privately organised and as a result they had to pay, yet they could not afford the money. They also said that most of the workshops were targeted at primary school teachers. Many teachers felt that if the government perceived ECCE as important, they should organise workshops in which ‘people with more knowledge could come and teach’ them (Teacher, pre-school K2)

Absence of a career ladder also impacted on the performance of nursery school teachers. Unlike teachers at other levels whose opportunities to progress were ‘so diverse’, ECCE teachers expressed the concern that their becoming nursery school teachers meant that they will always be nursery school teachers. Most of them gave examples of primary school teachers who easily progressed to diploma and degree levels, as well as having opportunities of becoming heads of schools. Also, some said that literally their access to courses such as Diplomas was very difficult, which to a great extent depended on ‘which college you got your certificate from’ (Teacher, pre-school J1). One teacher said that after she had qualified with a certificate, she wanted to do a Diploma in ECCE at Kyambogo University, the leading ECCE teacher training institution in the country. But because her certificate was from an unaccredited college, she was told that she would have to re-do her certificate at Kyambogo University for the whole duration of the course, before she could enrol for a Diploma (School K2). Teachers said that because of lack of career advancement, they feel demoralised and hence offered substandard services to children under their care.

Lastly, teachers’ reason for their choice of career was another factor that impacted heavily on their quality. Because of the way most teachers found themselves in nursery school teaching, their degree of psychological or emotional attachment to their profession was found to be weak. This is because their choice of career was not intrinsically motivated. As a result, such teachers lacked what is termed as affective or attitudinal commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Most of the teachers interviewed said that it was never their intention to become nursery school teachers. One teacher said that she became a nursery school teacher after becoming pregnant (School J2). While another said that because she did not perform well at senior four, she had nothing to do and her parents forced her to join nursery teaching (School K1). Also, one tutor told me of a primary teacher training institution, which offered students who failed to qualify to enter the college as primary school teacher trainees, to train as nursery school teachers. Such factors meant that some teachers were in the ECCE profession not

because they wanted to do so, a thing that subsequently affected their performance, as there was no individual conviction towards one's work.

In addition to inadequately equipped managers and teachers, lack of a well-defined curriculum enormously affected the quality of services offered to children. All the schools visited in Jinja and Kampala Districts did not have a defined curriculum for their teachers to follow. As a result, teachers had to rely on a combination of their experience and help from their fellow teachers. Also, some individuals had come up with companies that produced mainly examination papers, and pamphlets of schemes of work from different nursery schools, which most teachers used as their guide in planning what to teach children. What should be noted here is that proprietors of these businesses were not qualified in this area. In fact one proprietor was a former primary school teacher, who was driven in this area to 'offer some guidance to the sector', and also because of money. To make matters worse, the government never supervised these businesses. One proprietor said that he started his business five years ago, but government officials had never visited him. Commenting on the lack of supervision from the government, he said '*Government eri kubilara nyo*' (meaning 'the government is on other things'). When asked about their products being too academic and advanced for children 3-6 years, proprietors interviewed said that what they did was 'market driven'. That is, they studied the market and found out what the market wanted. Another proprietor said 'If your products are of low grade, you will not sell'. Generally, proprietors expressed concern about the type of exams that they were setting for this age group as being 'too hard and unnecessary'. But because they were looking for money, they had to produce what was acceptable in the market. Commenting on the exams, one proprietor said '*ebibuuzo bya nursery bibatwala wa?*' (Meaning-'where do nursery school exams take children?')

Although a national nursery school curriculum (also known as Learning Framework) was developed and disseminated in 2005 by NCDC, most schools did not have a copy and some teachers did not actually know that it existed. Even those that had a copy, they found it hard to interpret it because it did not have a teachers' guide. While some schools did not simply use it because its 'standard was too low' compared to what they were used to. As observed by one District Inspector of Schools, ECCE programs had gone many steps ahead and as a result, they viewed the new nursery curriculum as something that was trying to water down their efforts. For example, the new learning framework emphasized the use of mother tongue, a thing that was highly disliked by the market at large. This was because parents viewed their

children's speaking English as something of great importance as far as their children's learning and development was concerned. But overall, as observed by one proprietor, the new nursery curriculum had proved unpopular in schools because of 'fear of change' among teachers. This was because it 'required them to read', hence taking them out of their 'comfort', 'traditional', and 'familiar' zone.

What should be emphasized however is that nursery school education, regardless of government efforts, is still largely in the hands of private entrepreneurs meaning that it is highly 'customer driven'. And as a result, schools have to follow parents' expectations. As one head teacher said, 'Parents are the customers. We get nothing from the government'. In support of the head teacher, one tutor said 'and these are private institutions...you must be a 'yes, yes' person'. When I put this concern to one District official, he was dismissive and said:

They have the curriculum...now if parents are very demanding, there are parents' days...you call parents and talk to them. Say (to them) 'so much as you are putting pressure on us, this is what we are supposed to do'. The parent cannot demand from a teacher that 'now you are not teaching numbers...my child does not know how to write'. You tell them what the purpose of the nursery school is and what children are supposed to learn at this level'. So I think that is the problem on the side of the teachers (District Education Officer)

Responding to the government official's statement, most head teachers and teachers insisted that it should actually be the government, which should sensitize the parents because their attitude is '*omwana abera atya awo nga tawandiika?*' (Meaning- 'how can a child be in school when he or she does not write') (Head teacher, school K1). However, it became apparent that parents' excessive demands on children in ECCE was strongly influenced by their children performing well in primary seven exams. To such parents, if their children performed well in primary seven, this guaranteed then a place in 'good' secondary schools and increased chances of their children qualifying for university after completing senior six (Teacher, School K2).

The Village level

At the village level, there was still lack of awareness of the importance of ECCE. Especially in the villages, the need for ECCE had not been well embraced. Thus, some parents did not

see any importance in taking children to nursery schools. In fact most of the parents interviewed whose children did not attend any form of ECCE, said that children only went to play and that they would not waste their money, let alone afford to pay for their children to go to nursery schools.

When talking to Local Council members at the village level about the lack of awareness and if they were at all involved in provision, they said that they were not involved at all in ECCE provision and that they received no information from the district council or the central government. They felt that because they were part and parcel of the local government, they were not being put to good use as far as improving quality and accessibility in ECCE was concerned. To them, they had access to the community more than any other level in Uganda's government structure, a thing that would make it easy for them to make people aware of the importance of ECCE and also to monitor quality and accessibility in provision. One local council member said that because the 'program is not well sold to the public' the government should get involved in ECCE the same way as it did with Universal Primary Education (UPE). Commenting on the issue he went on to say:

For example, for UPE government held seminars and also brought in Bi-laws. If a primary school age going child was not in school, the parents were asked why and they could be taken to court. This helped to change people's perception of primary schooling. The same should apply to nursery schooling. Parents will know that it is equally important (Local Council representative 3)

The District level

At the district level, limited support from the central government to the districts impacted upon local government officials' involvement in ECCE provision, hence the existing quality. One local official said that although the district council is mandated through the 1997 Local Government Act to be responsible for education services including nursery education, there was no legal or institutional framework to support them at the district. He said that although 'this age bracket is an endangered species' and that 'things were critically bad', he knew the word nursery school in one sentence, and that was the local government act of 1997. He went on to say that the interview he had with me was the only serious and long discussion he had ever had concerning ECCE and that if he had had other commitments, he would not have wasted his time with me. To him, because there was no support from the central government

towards their role of participating in ECCE provision, the district had no choice but to look on (District official 1, Local Government).

Concerning inspection, all the pre-schools visited reported that they had never been inspected since they opened. Head mistresses and teachers in all the pre-schools visited, acknowledged that lack of inspection was adversely affecting quality in ECCE provision. When asked about why this was so, District Education Officers and District Inspectors of Schools ((DEOs and DISs hereafter) in the districts visited gave a number of problems that affected their work and hence led to what was described as ‘limited’ or ‘inadequate’ inspection of pre-schools:

- Inspectors said that their job was hindered due to lack of vehicles. One inspector said:
You can prepare to go and inspect a school... the programme says three days, but Lack of vehicles for use in the field cripples you. Even the few vehicles that are available, you might not have the fuel (DIS 1)

Commenting on the same issue, another inspector said that the problem of fuel was so severe to the extent that even when they were willing to use their own vehicles, they were not able (DIS 2)

- Inspectors also expressed concern that they were assigned too many roles, a thing that left them with not much time to carry out inspection tasks. For example, one inspector said that on top of inspecting schools, they were expected to do administrative work, attend meetings as well as draw up plans. She went on to say:
They (the schools) are not inspected as planned ...because of overlapping programmes...you can prepare to inspect a school, then you are called to go somewhere for a two week workshop. Then you cannot follow your program. Also, we are supposed to write a report after every inspection and then make recommendations. We are supposed to follow up those recommendations but it is rare because we are over-taken by other events. We feel that if we are inspectors, we should be in the field in schools and not surely doing all the administrative work because as a department, we have the inspection, we have the administration (sections) (DIS 1)

- Inadequate funding was also pointed out as one of the factors affecting inspection in the districts. The Inspectors said that no money was allocated for the purposes of inspecting ECCE centres. In fact they were allocated only 5% from the UPE money sent to the districts from the central government, money that meant to be used to monitor UPE. To them, this 5% cannot be stretched to include ECCE inspection. And because of this, they said that they hardly inspected nursery schools and that the only time that they got in contact with such centres was when they were seeking licences to allow them to operate.
- Inspectors also faced the problem of inaccessibility of some schools especially when it rained;
- Lack of an ECCE policy also made it difficult for them to access, inspect and also penalise those nursery schools that were operating below standard;
- They also faced the problem of too few staff yet there were too many nursery schools on top of the work of inspecting all primary schools;
- Political interference was another issue that was mentioned as adversely affecting inspectors in their role of quality assurance. They said that because there existed ‘a lot of politics in schools’ this made their job difficult as they were literally stripped of their powers to do their work. In one of the districts that I visited, the DEO and DIS gave an example of one school that was operating below standard. After persistently failing to improve, they ordered the school to be closed. But because the head teacher knew one of the politicians, he ran to him and the politician allowed him to carry on operating, without the knowledge of the DEO and the DIS. To make matters worse, that particular politician to whom the owner of the school had talked to, was invited to some ceremony in that same school, and he asked both the DEO and the DIS to escort him, which they did but with a lot of embarrassment.

Due to the above, it meant that pre-schools deemed as ‘sub-standard’ were left to operate, as there was no other alternative. DEOs and DISs said that when they raise the issue of political interference, politicians interpret it as an ‘intervention’ rather than ‘interference’. One inspector said;

You see schools with very low standards, the structures are very bad; closing such a school becomes a problem or recommending closure because the moment you do it, the politician will come and say ‘I want my school to exist the way it

is. It is giving services to the people around. These are my voters. If you close that school, you are not doing me service. So my voters will not give me votes next time' (DIS 1)

DEOs and DISs said that political interference was a very common occurrence. As for the politicians, they argue that they can do nothing about it, because they cannot afford to fall out with the very people that voted for them. But inspectors said that such interference crippled their work as it sent a clear message that inspectors did not have powers whatsoever to punish 'wrongdoers'. One DIS said that the only way to deter politicians should be by sensitising politicians not to 'interfere with the work of inspectors'. But what I learnt later was that the local government as opposed to the central government appoints both the DIS and the DEO. This inevitably makes them very vulnerable, as they are 'firmly' under the control of the politicians.

However, during the course of my interviews in the districts, two concerns emerged as the other factors that affected inspection of pre-school in addition to those mentioned above. First, it became clear to me during the course of this research that inspectors did not have the necessary training to inspect ECCE centres. Commenting on the issue, one Local government official said:

The inspectors themselves are not trained in the area of ECCE... in fact the DIS would be more confused than me on the matters concerning ECCE in the district; the very person who is expected to monitor quality. The government should make sure that those who inspect ECCE centres specialise in this particular area; with their role being solely of mapping and inspecting these centres (District official 1, Local Government)

Second, inspectors were not clear about their role as far as the inspection of ECCE programs was concerned. Thus, some regarded their inspection of ECCE centres as purely a good will gesture, while others believed that it was their responsibility. With regards to the former, one inspector said:

I am not mandated to inspect nursery schools. I have never been questioned why I don't inspect nursery schools (DIS 1)

While another inspector said:

We are in fact mandated to inspect wherever and whenever learning and teaching takes place (DIS 2)

When looking at the scheduled duties of the education department at the district level however, inspectors were mandated to ‘plan for inspection of all Education Institutions’. But perhaps because ECCE was not part of formal education, this gave them ‘leeway’ to do it or not.

But overall, schools that I visited were desperate for some guidance from the government. One head teacher said ‘we need to be monitored ...then we shall be giving quality education’. While another head teacher said ‘if someone visits you, you know that they think about you. Even if they find you in mistakes, they guide you. They are there (referring to the inspectors) but they do not visit us’ (School J2)

The Ministry level

At the Ministry of Education and Sports, the internal environment was heavily influencing how departments within the ministry were performing towards their stated goals. Basically ‘internal environment’ refers to factors inside a department or ministry, which influences its cohesiveness and the energy it displays in pursuing the set goals. Performance at this level is influenced by the availability of resources such as the number of staff, finances, and appropriate staff qualification and experience. These resources make up the overall capacity of departments, which translate into efficiency and effectiveness towards the assigned roles.

Inadequate funding affected the way government departments carried out their roles in an attempt to ensure quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. The department responsible for ensuring that providers adhered to the standards for example, expressed concern on the infrequency in their inspection duties. Although the department was entitled to 5% of the UPE money, this money was not enough to fund all inspection activities including ECCE. One officer said:

We hear about these things (meaning poor quality in provision) but we are not able to go down ...because of money...we cannot address them (the problems)

because we cannot go down (Government official 3, Ministry of Education and Sports)

Personnel in this particular department said that in order to address the problem of lack of money, they opted to doing two things: Firstly, they adopted the use of what they termed as an 'associate assessors' model'. In this model, people were employed on a temporary basis and were trained in the use of inspection instruments. These people along with the officers went to the field to inspect as a team. What this meant however was that the people that were being used were given a crash programme in school inspection other than being experienced inspectors. Secondly, the department was charging those who would wish their schools to be inspected. One government official said,

They come and express interest...they want their schools to be inspected, they look for funding, and we give the technical (support). This is the kind of operation we are now following given the absence of government funding (Government official 7, Ministry of Education and Sports)

However useful this new operation is, it became clear that there was a perpetuation of poor standards as only those schools or organisations that could afford to pay inspectors had their schools inspected. Even those that paid for their inspection, it was apparent that the availability of funds dictated how often their schools were inspected. Also, some schools and organisations were not comfortable with the idea much as they would want their schools inspected. One respondent said:

When you call the Ministry of Education and Sports, they always want to be given money. In a way we feel we should not give them money because this is their work. ...so they only look at it in terms of money. That is the biggest challenge we have (NGO representative 7, Kampala District)

However, Ministry of Education and Sports personnel did not see it this way and insisted that lack of funding was the cause. When talking to another government official, for example, she said that there was lack of funding because government did not invest directly in the area of ECCE and that there was no line budget. As a result, most departments relied on donor

agencies and hence operated on what she termed as 'basket funding' (Government official 8, Ministry of Education and Sports).

Coupled with inadequate funding was inadequate staffing at the ministry. In all the departments, it was mentioned that staff were working under enormous pressure due to the fact that they had a big workload due to the small number of staff that were employed. In the department responsible for monitoring standards in the country for example, staff stated that understaffing dictated the frequency of the trips they made to the field. The same issue was affecting the department of primary and pre-primary. A top government official confirmed the earlier concerns and she said that the number of people employed was a very big issue. She gave an example of only four people being employed in the whole department of primary and pre-primary. The four people had to spread their work across the primary and pre-primary sections, a thing that made their workload overwhelming. She went on to say that the limited number meant that they were 'thin on the ground' a thing that acted as a barrier to their 'productivity' and as a result enormously affected their efforts towards improving quality in ECCE provision (Government official 6, Ministry of Education and Sports)

Lack of experts in the area of ECCE across all departments was another factor that was affecting quality in provision. It was mentioned that most of the people employed by the ministry did not have adequate training in this area. But what should be remembered is that the area of ECCE has been over-looked for many years, which meant that the number of people specialising in this area has been very minimal. Some respondents felt that because ECCE is still not given the attention it deserves, criteria for selecting people was based on how well their experience and qualifications would encourage quality most especially in the primary section. This is because according to such respondents, including ECCE in the department was just a 'by the way'. Commenting on the issue, one respondent said:

People in the Department of primary and pre-primary at the ministry are actually... most of them are people who are more exposed to education at other levels. They are (former) lecturers at universities or maybe they are former secondary school teachers or former primary school teachers. They do not understand pre-primary (Education psychologist)

During the course of the research many people expressed concern that employment of people in departments was based on ‘technical know-who’ as opposed to ‘technical know-how’. And that after selection, such people were taken for short training courses that in turn ‘guaranteed’ them work in the departments. A large number of people felt that in order to ensure quality in ECCE provision, there ought to be a separate department for ECCE under the ministry, which ‘should not just have anyone, but professionals in pre-primary education; people who can supervise and advice the ministry when things are not going right’. This is because, they said, pre-primary education needs professionally trained individuals, and that employing a secondary school teacher who has been taught to handle adolescents would not help much in improving quality in ECCE provision (Education psychologist; Head teacher, school K2; Teacher, school J3; and Tutor ECCE teacher Training college 2, Jinja District)

Among stakeholders

Weak networking and linkages among the different stakeholders was mentioned as another issue affecting quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. In essence, network and linkages in the area of ECCE mean forming formal and informal partnerships and ties between agencies, private providers, various government departments, national and international donors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), advocacy groups, and academic institutes that have a common vision and values. In networks, the relationship between the different parties is much stronger usually because they have common objectives and beneficiaries, while in linkages, their level of commitment is quite loose or virtually none existent. However, although networks and linkages are seen as very useful in ensuring coherent efforts towards the achievement of quality in provision, this was not the case in Uganda. In fact to a great extent efforts had consisted of isolated initiatives by the different stakeholders. That is, there was weak and sometimes no partnership between the different stakeholders in terms of financing, technical know-how, skills sharing, monitoring and evaluation or impact assessment, advocacy initiatives, cross-sharing of experiences, and exchange of grass root level knowledge. Such absence of strong partnerships had worked against the ECCE sub-sector in a number of ways:

- It had slowed down progress through duplication of efforts;
- It had degenerated solidarity;
- The program outreach and visibility had not been greatly increased;
- There existed weak sharing of knowledge, skills, expertise and experiences, which had affected both efficiency and effectiveness;

- There had been replication of funds, and grants had not been meaningfully managed because parties were not complementing each other's work;
- There was no collective voice/ advocacy towards ECCE;
- The program had not been given a holistic approach;
- In most cases efforts had only lasted a short while

Because of all the above, efforts to improve quality and accessibility in ECCE provision had remained modest. This is due to the fact that improving quality requires concerted countrywide action. Isolated initiatives therefore, had resulted in weakened capacity of the different actors involved, leading to the creation of a feeble mass of action.

The broader context

The broader context or system played a major role in the existing quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. In essence, it is this level that sets the scene; the level that can foster or hinder services provided to children. By definition, a system is a regular interaction or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole. At this level, a set of entities operate towards a common purpose and according to certain rules and processes. The system covers the entire country and all the sub-components that are involved. The actions of individuals, government ministries, organisations or network of organisations are embedded in this wider context. And it is the prevailing political, social, economic, and physical environments that influence how all the entities within the system perform. During this research, it became clear that rather than providing an 'enabling' environment, the wider context was providing a 'disabling' environment in which the different entities operated, resulting in undesirable quality and accessibility in ECCE provision.

The political context

On the political front, the lack of an ECCE policy was mentioned as one issue that affected both quality and accessibility. To some, ECCE policy 'is one area that the Ministry of Education and Sports has ignored for a long time' (Education Psychologist). Lack of an ECCE policy had affected provision tremendously, as it had led to poor regulatory framework. A system of regulation in ECCE includes legislated standards, as well as monitoring and enforcement. Although standards do not necessarily guarantee quality, they set a minimum baseline that providers must adhere to (Kagan, 2006). A good regulatory framework therefore translates into better ratios, better-trained staff, and more developmentally appropriate staff/child interactions. In Uganda, because the entire ECCE

sector has been (and still is) in the hands of private providers with no government hand in it, there was differing quality in provision. At the school level, there were no minimum requirements for providers to follow when opening up centres, which resulted in centres being operated with inadequate facilities, inadequate curriculum, inadequately trained head teachers and teachers, and poor curricula in use. Teacher training institutions opened wherever and whenever they wanted, with no minimum standards to guide them. And the mechanism to monitor both ECCE centres and teacher training institutions was inadequate. Lack of an ECCE policy was repeatedly mentioned as the underpinning factor for the present quality in ECCE provision (See Table 6.1).

- Improvement in quality of ECCE provision would all begin with policy. Without it you don't have a voice (DIS);
- Policy has not been passed...providers are operating outside policy (DEO);
- No Policy, no yardstick for measurement (Government official 7, Ministry of Education and Sports);
- People use trial and error if there is no policy to guide them (Education psychologist);
- You cannot penalise a school if policy is not there (DIS)
- If there are no guidelines, you cannot blame anybody (Government Official7, Ministry of Education and Sports);
- Without a law, everything remains a proposal (Government official 7, Ministry of Education and Sports);
- Without a policy, you don't have a clear and straight forward way of dealing with things (Government official 6, Ministry of Education and Sports);

Table 6.1: People's views on the effect of the lack of an ECCE policy

Evidently, plans were underway to develop a policy, but 'the process has taken a very long time' said one respondent (Government official 3, Ministry of Education and Sports). Commenting on the same issue, another respondent said 'since the creation of the pre-primary unit, about six years ago, we have been trying to work on a policy' (Government official 4, Ministry of Education and Sports). This delay could be attributed to 'a lot of bureaucracy in

the system' said another respondent (Government official 3, Ministry of Education and Sports). Thus, the policy was taking so long because a number of people at different levels in the system were involved in the formulation process. When I put the issue of bureaucracy to one respondent as one of the factors affecting the finalisation of the policy, she had a different view of it. She said that 'policy formulation is a legal process which requires a lot of consultation, which means that there is no time-line'. She also added 'the policy could have been ready but it has to go back and forth down to the stakeholders who will implement it' (Government official 5). But what became clear during my research was that although it was typical for a bill or a policy to go through different stages, what actually delayed the policy was that there were many stakeholders involved. This was because the policy being formulated was not just an ECCE policy but also an ECD policy. This meant that as well as covering the education aspect, the policy also covers other aspects in children's development like nutrition and immunization. And as such the process had given a voice to many people with special interests in the issue, thus delaying the finalisation of the process. When speaking to one director of a national Non-Governmental Organisation, she agreed with my understanding and interpretation of the reason behind this delay. She said that when the policy draft was passed to them, they did not embrace it because some issues concerning ECD had not been well represented. She said that the draft was sent back requesting their highlighted amendments be included (NGO representative 4, Kampala District). But one respondent in particular had fears that this delay might not materialise into anything, given the fact that the 'government does things and just leaves them there' without pursuing them to the end (NGO representative 7, Kampala District).

Lack of a policy on the ground had also led to scarcity of ECCE data. As mentioned in Chapter Three, a comprehensive database is vital in ensuring good quality and accessibility in ECCE provision of any country. But existence of a good database is driven by an existing policy to which all stakeholders must adhere. One respondent in the Ministry of Education and Sports suggested that although data is available out there, the fact that provision is solely in private hands makes it impossible for government officials to access it. He went on to say that there was a lot of apprehensiveness when it came to the issue of data, because people thought that data was collected because the government wanted to tax them. And because there was no legislation for all stakeholders to adhere to, he said that this had resulted in a very low response rate because people did not know or see the reason why they should comply. To him, this 'big weakness in the sector' was due to lack of a policy, and he felt that

it would be useful for the government to assert its authority and hence ‘make it unattractive’ for providers ‘not to respond’. This is because, according to him, inadequate data meant that adequate plans could not be made, no proper action could be taken on anything, and informed decisions could not be made (Government official 6, Ministry of Education and Sports). It was evident that lack of an ECCE policy had done a lot of ‘harm’ to the ECCE sub-sector in that data was scanty, something that was made worse because there was no ‘report’ culture. People were not sensitised, there was no advocacy for statistics, and there was lack of a good system to handle statistics.

Another political issue that was mentioned was the policy of decentralization. Decentralisation is not a new concept. It has been implemented in many countries in Africa (including Uganda), in Eastern Europe, Asia, and more and more countries are following suit. In the western world, decentralisation is viewed as one way of providing public services in a more cost-effective way, while developing countries are adopting it as a way of tackling economic inefficiencies, macro-economic instability and ineffective governance (Agere, 2000).

In Uganda, the policy of decentralisation started in 1992, and it led to the local government statute of 1993. Under this policy, it means that some of the functions of the central government are now devolved down to the local government. Subsequently, local governments are now empowered to make decisions with the aim of improving administrative performance, as well as increasing transparency and strengthening accountability. Thus, the role of service delivery has been largely removed from the centre, leaving the centre with such roles as policy formulation, coordination, standard setting, regulation and monitoring, as well as provision of technical advice and support to local governments (Muheirwe *et al.*, 2002). However, although the policy of decentralisation in Uganda is seen as one way of improving service delivery to the masses by giving districts political and administrative powers as well as financial and planning authority, this has not translated into improved quality as far as ECCE provision is concerned.

Although it was clearly indicated in the 1997 Local Governments Act that ‘functions and services for which District Councils are responsible, subject to Article 176 (2) of the constitution of Uganda and section 97 and 98 include but not limited to education services, which cover nursery ...’, such a responsibility had not been followed by financial support

from the central government. Lack of financial support, according to one respondent, had affected their participation in improving quality in ECCE provision. He said that the government simply ‘threw’ the responsibility to them but without any further support. And because they were financially constrained, it was practically impossible for them to deal with any issues concerning ECCE. He went on to say that as a district, they were getting about thirty million Uganda shillings from the central government for all the district’s budgetary requirements. And because graduated tax was scrapped, this meant that the money raised in the district was minimal (District Official 1, Local Government)

When I put the issue of lack of funding to one top government official, her reply was:

That Act (the Local Government Act) gave them a job to do but they are failing to interpret the Act (Ministry of Education and Sports)

But the local government official I had talked to earlier insisted that:

The government has no interest in nursery schools whatsoever, but this responsibility was blindly passed onto us ...an indication of it (the government) running away from a lot of responsibilities, and the district has no option but to look on. The bottom line is, the government should ensure that there are enough resources (District official 1, Local Government)

What became clear was that much as it was clearly indicated in the local government act, local governments did not have the necessary capacity to plan and implement ECCE programs. With the limited money released from the central government to the districts, there arose a big challenge of establishing priorities for investing the available meagre resources. One question that is often asked amidst the multitude of competing priorities is, ‘where will the investment fetch the most returns?’ Unfortunately when it comes to this question, ECCE comes down the bottom of the list. This is because what policy makers need is ‘quick returns’, yet returns in the area of ECCE though long lasting, may take years to be realized.

Still within the political aspect, the UPE policy was mentioned. UPE is a policy that was launched in Uganda in 1997, and saw a massive increase in primary school enrolment. But however fruitful the UPE policy has been to thousands of children, it has had far reaching effect as far as quality and accessibility in ECCE is concerned. First some parents had chosen

not to take their children to preschools because it required them to pay school fees. And because of this, they preferred to keep their children at home until they were old enough to join primary one. When asked why her child was not attending pre-primary, one parent said:

Why should I struggle to raise 15,000 shillings or 20,000 shillings every term for my child to attend pre-school when in primary one I will not be required to pay school fees. I will wait for primary one (Parent 1 of a non-enrollee)

Second, of those children that were enrolled in primary one, some of them were actually nursery school going children. Because UPE is provided free of charge, parents preferred taking their children straight to primary one rather than sending them to pre-schools where they had to pay school fees. And because there was no strong policy of parents presenting children's birth certificates to schools, such children were enrolled without proof of age. Also, some head teachers knowingly enrolled under-age children to primary one because of 'the money that schools received from the government' said one respondent. Thus, the more children there were in a school, the more money that school got. Two government officials confirmed this concern. They said that what such head teachers do, they have three streams in primary one; stream A, stream B, and stream C. Those children that are in primary one A, are the ones of the right primary school going age. While those in streams B and C are pre-primary age. When the children in primary one A are promoted to primary two at the end of the year, those in stream B and stream C are put in stream A. But according to the register, those children are regarded as primary one repeaters. Such practice, they said, was 'dangerous' to children 'because it exposes children to age-inappropriate primary school work (Government officials 7 and 8, Ministry of Education and Sports).

The social context

The social environment was also seen as working against both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. The social environment points to a broader context within which the public sector operates. Government actions by themselves will not be sufficient to achieve significant results in an effort to improve quality and accessibility. The acceptance of government policies and regulations by the citizens, businesses and NGOs are essential to the successful improvement of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. That is, if values and practices foster cooperation among the different parties, then there is a creation of a sense of collective responsibility towards improving quality and accessibility in ECCE provision and

acceptance of government initiatives. This however was not the case in Uganda. The different parties that were actively involved in program provision held differing values and practices from those of the government as far as quality in ECCE provision was concerned. This was because the sector had been in the hands of private providers for a very long time. Throughout this time, providers had created their own values and practices, which had taken deep root with regard to what children should be taught and how they should be taught.

Recently, the government came up with a learning framework, which was ‘contrary’ to the values and practices that providers had got used to over many years. For example, parents had dictated to the providers the kind of things that they wanted their children to learn, and providers responded to ‘market demands’ by doing exactly what was expected of them. The new learning framework was introducing new values and practices where children had to learn in different ways than previously; instruction was to be in a child’s mother tongue, and approach to teaching was to be child-centred. In essence, the new approach proposed by the central government had not been embraced by many providers and parents as well, simply because it dictated to them what they had to adhere to, hence challenging their ‘accepted’ values and practices. As a result, both providers and parents reacted in different ways: providers who had accessed the new curriculum had either used it alongside their ‘traditional’ curriculum or they had simply thrown it on a shelf. While on the part of parents, some headmistresses said that parents were threatening to remove their children from schools if the new learning framework was adopted (Schools J3 and school K1). This reaction to the new learning framework was as a result of parents’ and providers’ strong belief that by adopting the new curriculum children would be learning ‘very little’ or ‘nothing’.

Because of these differing values and practices, government efforts to improve quality in ECCE provision has overall not been successful. The broader social environment thus draws a distinction between ability and willingness to implement government initiatives. Whether or not there are enough human and financial resources, but with a society that is not ready to accept the new initiatives because they conflict with its own values and beliefs, will not lead to effective implementation of such initiatives. There is therefore need for the government to prioritize the issue of public awareness and education, which will result in greater consensus between the government and the stakeholders, of the ‘new’ or desired values and norms as far as ECCE is concerned.

The economic context

The economic environment was also having enormous effect on both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, the aggregate expenditure on education as a whole and ECCE in particular, is a good indicator of the government's commitment towards improving quality and accessibility. In Uganda, it was clear that the government had done amazingly well to develop quality in the ECCE sector by for example, creating the department of primary and pre-primary education. But such efforts had not been followed by concrete financial commitment. In fact the sector heavily relied on help from international organisations other than the government taking the leading role. For example formulation of the learning framework was financed by organisations like UNICEF, Aga khan, and the World Bank. As reported earlier, one government official said that the government did not invest directly in the ECCE sector and that there was no line budget. This meant that government departments were not being adequately funded, meaning that they too depended on funding agencies. When I put the question of inadequate funding of the sector to a top government official, her reply was:

There is no money... we have competing priorities...we cannot do it. We are struggling with children six plus...we cannot do both, but we have to put emphasis on primary (schooling) (Government official 4, Ministry of Education and Sports)

What became clear during the course of collecting information for this study was that although there was a problem of inadequate funding, the relative unimportance given to this sub-sector compared to other sectors of education was another issue. Thus, although there has been increased advocacy from the West on the issue of quality and accessibility in ECCE provision, Uganda had not 'disentangled' herself from the colonial legacy of focusing on primary education and beyond. Thus to many, ECCE was seen as unnecessary and it was thought that the 'responsibility should be left to parents to teach their children in one way or another', said a top government official (Ministry of Education and Sports)

When talking to another government official on the issue of funding, she said:

The money we are receiving is too little compared to the cake we have. Now we have UPE, we have started Universal Secondary Education (USE), now every

body's attention is on USE and they don't even want to hear about nursery education. Even at the ministry level, some top officials have not realised the importance of ECCE. Some of them say 'do we really need ECCE? For us we never went to nursery schools. Is it a priority to us?' So we still have the challenge of winning the hearts of many people and convincing them (Government official 8, Ministry of Education and Sports)

Because of the 'lack of willingness by the government', said another respondent (NGO representative 5, Kampala district), ECCE had simply been left to the private sector. And according to a top government official, the private sector was doing a brilliant job and hence she could not 'recommend the government to pick up where the private sector was doing very well'. To her what the private sector needed was 'technical guidance', a thing that according to her had been worked on by creating what she termed as a 'desk', referring to the department of primary and pre-primary (Government official 4, Ministry of Education and Sports).

But the fact was that the private sector would only go where they could get adequate returns in terms of profit. And that basically meant urban centres. Some of the fees charged were actually much higher than fees charged at primary and secondary school levels, which meant that provision became only available to a 'chosen few'. Children were sent home if their parents failed to pay school fees within the time set by the pre-school management. Also, because centres were commercially run, providers first and foremost thought of profits before they could even think of equipping their centres with the right learning materials. That is, despite the amount of money that was being charged, most centres did not have adequate facilities.

The unfavourable economic environment also meant inadequate research capacity in the ECCE sub-sector. In Uganda, as in many African countries, there is relatively little investment made in ECCE research 'as it is generally still accorded low priority compared to other levels of education'. Poor research capacity meant that:

- It had not been possible to systematically learn from cross-national experiences in terms of lesson drawing from successful and unsuccessful program approaches;

- Policy makers had not been guided in priority setting. That is, because of lack or limited research carried out in this area, it had not been possible to change policy makers perception on ECCE by showing them that in fact it is one important issue that matters to society and country as a whole;
- It had created a problem of lack of specialist skills, and even the few researchers that existed could not undergo expert training. The outcome was that research findings were often of poor quality, a thing that could discourage policy makers from using local research outputs and hence seek findings from international agencies. Even the few trained competent researchers that existed preferred to devote themselves to consultation work sponsored by foreign organisations. They usually carried out research on a contractual basis, a thing that most likely defined their research priorities.
- Lack of funding had also jeopardised dissemination of research findings. There were limited local outlets, which in turn limited the distribution of the findings.

Still within the unfavourable economic environment, many people felt that international organisations were not doing enough to help improve quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. Firstly, the debt burden was cited as one example. It was felt that despite the adoption of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) policy, and the resultant cancellation of Uganda's debt of more than \$1 billion, Uganda's debt still remains a problem. Commenting on the issue, one respondent said:

This so-called debt relief scheme has not done enough to alleviate our debt burden as we are still paying a lot of money in debt servicing. This leaves us with little chance of investing in ECCE due to the many priorities competing for the limited funds available (Government official 8, Ministry of Education and Sports)

The Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme therefore, which was hailed, as 'the' solution to the debt burden of many poor nations, has not left Uganda in any better position. For example, despite the fact that in the year 2000 Uganda debt burden was reduced from \$4.5 billion to \$500 million (IRIN, 2006), it is steadily increasing and currently stands at \$1.456 billion (CIA, 2008). This has been, according to Jubilee (2000), the fact that:

- HIPC offers far too little, that is, it does not imply total cancellation;

- HIPC comes with damaging and unfair strings attached;
- HIPC does not include all debts: debts are only partially cancelled, and some countries, banks and companies refuse or fail to take part in the HIPC process at all;
- HIPC is entirely controlled by creditors who do not allow poor countries to have a say.

Uganda's debt burden is therefore an injustice that is hitting harder the most vulnerable-the children.

Secondly, despite the numerous efforts by international organizations in terms of starting centres, the funding of the Learning Framework (the curriculum) and other various ECCE projects in the country, many people felt that improvement in the quality in ECCE provision had been minimal. Concerning the centres, it was felt that they did not differ remarkably from those started by local Ugandans as far as quality was concerned. This concern was confirmed by one ECCE specialist, who said that she could not believe the quality of provision when she visited some centres started by some international organisations. She said that in one centre, there were about 100 children squeezed in one classroom, with no toilets, no water, and no learning materials, except a few 'white' 'same size' dolls. To her, even the few dolls that were present seemed to have been kept out of reach of children as they were very clean, and some children cried when they saw them. She went on to say that most likely, the dolls were brought into the classroom for children to play with because the management knew that she was coming that day. Commenting on what she witnessed in the centres, she said:

They (referring to international organisations) give us nonsense in form of support. What they do should serve as models (NGO representative 8, Kampala District)

But, she did not place the blame entirely on international organisations. She said that the government had a lot to answer for. She asked,

Why does the government allow them to set up centres without making sure that they adhere to basic requirements and minimum standards like latrines, water, and classrooms?

But to many people, the international organisations were to blame because they ‘knew better’. Such people said that because ECCE is ‘well developed in their countries’, they should actually be the ones to advise the government as far as quality and accessibility in ECCE provision is concerned.

Thirdly, people felt that because international organisations release funds with strings attached, such funds only achieve little. Citing the example of the Learning Framework, one respondent said that international organisations that were involved released money because they wanted their centres to have a curriculum to follow. And that when the Learning Framework was developed, it was disseminated free of charge in only those districts where such organisations were operating, and all their workers were oriented in how to use it. Also, the learning framework was translated in some local languages but mainly of the focus districts where they were operating (Government official 6). Commenting on the issue another government official said:

They say ‘okay we have helped you, this is a national document, but we are providing only for our area of focus’...so you find that other areas are left behind because there is no agency which is directly interested in developing that area (Government official 8, Ministry of Education and Sports)

Consequently, countrywide dissemination of the Learning Framework had not yet been achieved. And because there was no money, NCDC had to print and sell the framework in order to recover the printing costs, hence giving ‘a choice’ to providers of either to use it or not. Lack of money had also meant that teachers could not be oriented in using it, and the teachers’ guide had not been produced.

And lastly, respondents felt that although international organisations funded projects, the effect was short term. While such projects had helped in sensitizing people on the importance of ECCE, but when they ended, the initiative ended too. Most of the informants attributed this problem to the fact that local people were not given the opportunity to own such projects. Thus ‘sustainability was in most cases not in-built with the project...when the project has ended, the whole thing collapses’ said one respondent. In addition to lack of ownership, the length of funding for projects was mentioned as not enough to realise quality improvements. One government official said:

A lot of time is spent on sensitizing, recruiting and general capacity building. At times capacity building takes two years yet most projects have a life span of only five years. You find that for the first two or two and a half years, they are building capacity, they are training, they are procuring. In the third year, implementation starts and at times it also starts slowly, funds don't come in. You find that implementation usually is in the fourth year. Also that time lag is a problem. Five years to me is too little to measure the impact of a program (Government official 8, Ministry of Education and Sports)

On the whole, respondents felt that despite the help from international organisations, quality and accessibility still remained an issue. One respondent expressed her fear that, 'unless the government looks at us as a sub-sector that needs attention we will still remain where we are in twenty years' (Government Official, Ministry of Education and Sports). Thus to many, the government was yet to realize the need for a direct investment in ECCE provision as a prerequisite for ensuring quality and accessibility in provision. They said that such investment should be made directly in infrastructure, support services, training, and research. And that investment should be redistributive, ensuring the development of services in low-income areas, where there are currently few or no services.

The physical context

The physical environment also affected ECCE quality in that it hindered inspectors from carrying out their work as some parts of the country were virtually inaccessible due to their remoteness or bad roads. This meant that Pre-schools in rural communities were often left isolated when roads become impassable during rainy seasons. As in many African countries, 'better' roads in Uganda are concentrated in urban areas, although their quality too is less than satisfactory. Some people attributed this pattern of road development to Uganda's colonial past in which Uganda inherited highly dispersed and unevenly distributed roads. This is because during the colonial era, the limited road building was driven by the objective of connecting natural resources to export markets (Torero and Chowdhury 2005). Such road patterns were therefore viewed as a major factor that was holding back the development of integrated roads in Uganda. Because adequate roads are essential for the promotion of quality in ECCE, many respondents felt that the Ugandan government could do more to provide sufficient funding to fully improve and maintain rural roads. This is because building

infrastructure involves significant initial outlay of capital and management. Yet involving private investment in this venture was certainly not very easy due to the fact that investors would only rush into sectors where they were certain to reap profits, and investing in rural road development therefore makes no economic sense at all. This is because road building requires great costs, yet this venture would most likely mean little or no financial returns.

But to some people, lack of inspection of rural schools was not solely due to inadequate roads, because ‘the same pattern of inspection existed in pre-schools in semi-urban and urban centres’. The problem therefore, stemmed from the inability of inspectors to locate schools. One Local council member said,

I don’t think the DIS or DEO know how many Nursery schools there are in the district, a thing that makes monitoring very hard (District official 1, Local Government)

As mentioned earlier, pre-school education has been in the hands of the private sector with providers opening up centres sometimes without getting them registered. It then becomes very difficult for inspectors to know the number of schools in operation, let alone inspect them. The problem becomes even more complex when there are only a few inspectors to work in both the ECCE and the primary section. When talking to one inspector, she said that a preschools operating without a licence was common in Uganda. And because such schools were not recorded/ registered, it became impossible to know and hence track them down.

Summary

This chapter has shown that there are a ‘cocktail’ of factors that have continued to impact upon both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. Such factors are both internal and external to Uganda, and they are economic, socio-cultural, physical, as well as political in nature. But generally, findings in this chapter reveal that the overall cause of inadequacies is that ECCE has still not been given the attention it deserves. This could be attributed to one of the many ‘colonial scars’ discussed in Chapter One, of focusing on primary education while leaving ECCE to be a private sector responsibility. Although the argument made by many government officials in this regard, was that even though they underscored the importance of ECCE they still found it economically difficult to get actively involved, it emerged during the course of this study that some government officials did not in

fact regard ECCE as ‘important’. This partly explains why there is still limited sensitization of the public, why untrained head teachers are managing ECCE centres, why there is limited inspection of the centres, and why there is inadequate allocation of resources to the sub-sector. It leads one to conclude that the changes made so far, are a ‘reaction’ to international pressure rather than a national recognition by the government of Uganda of the importance of ECCE to her future growth and development. This explains why, as one respondent suggested, sensitization on the importance of ECCE should start with government officials, not as it is widely suggested, at the grassroots level.

I mentioned in Chapters Four and Five that my failure to get a balanced selection of pre-schools in Kampala District in terms of provider and location led me to Wakiso District. Wakiso District did not only help to provide a balance for my study, but it also provided what could be termed as a ‘model’ pre-school that could be the answer to Uganda’s effort to attaining quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. This ‘model’ pre-school is a community initiative, but one that bares the quality marks as defined by the international community. The quality marks are contextualized or ‘Ugandanized’, making them culturally relevant and economically achievable. It was noted in Chapter Four that the main reason why findings from this ‘model’ program are presented separately rather than alongside the results of the other five pre-schools, is to allow sufficient elaboration of the issues related to quality and accessibility in Jinja and Kampala Districts. The ‘model’ school, as noted above, does provide an apparent solution within Uganda that is economically achievable and culturally sensitive. The next chapter (Chapter Seven) therefore, is devoted to presenting findings on this ‘model’ pre-school- pre-school W1 I visited in Wakiso District.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The ‘model’ pre-school program: pre-school W1 in Wakiso District

District profile

Physical description

Formally part of Mpigi District, Wakiso District is one of the youngest districts in Uganda. It was created by an Act of Parliament in November 2000. As a district, Wakiso encircles Kampala District. It is bordered by Luwero and Nakaseke Districts to the North, Mukono and Kampala Districts to the East, Mpigi and Mityana Districts to the West, and Kalangala District lying in Lake Victoria to the South. Wakiso covers a total of 2,704.45 square kilometers; out of which 1710.45 square kilometers is land area, while 994.00 square kilometers is covered with forest, water and swamps. Wakiso District is the second most populated district in Uganda with a total population of 957,280 people (2002 Census). The district is divided into two counties (Busiro and Kyadondo) and one Municipality (Entebbe). The district is further sub-divided into 14 sub-counties, 2 town councils and 2 municipal divisions. It has a total of 135 parishes and 676 villages.

Wakiso District

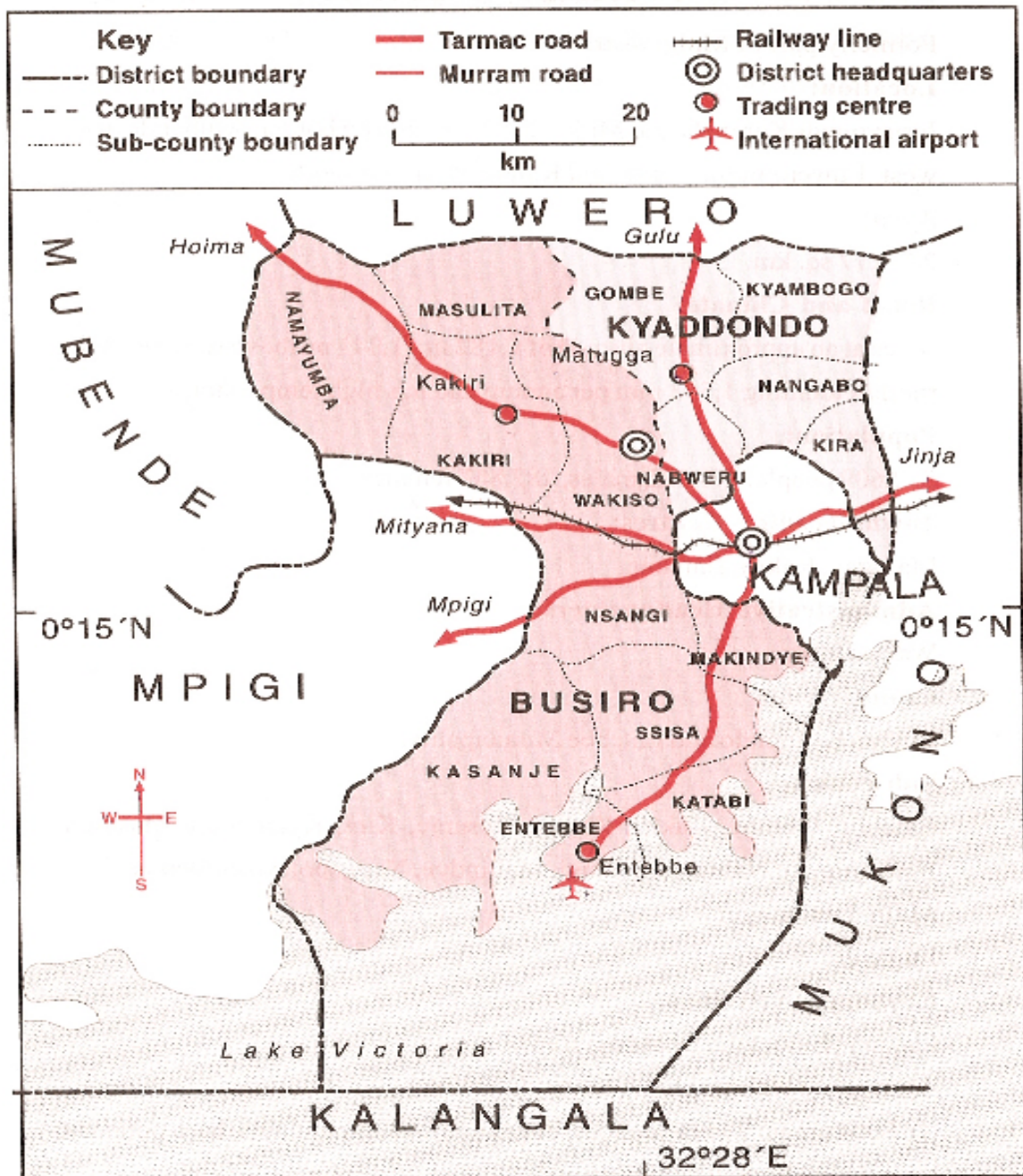


Fig 7.1: Map of Wakiso District showing the area of research-Nangabo sub-county

Ethnicity

Like in Kampala District, the people in Wakiso District are Baganda and the main language is Luganda, although there are other numerous ethnic groups.

The economy

Wakiso District has a mixture of both trade and agriculture as the major source of income. However, like any other district in Uganda, the majority of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Much of it is still on a subsistence level, but commercialization is quickly catching up with people growing crops such as sweet potatoes, beans, Cassava, Groundnuts, Soya, Onions and Cabbage. Such crops are supplied to major markets in the country and along the major highway leading out to Kampala District. Modern farming such as horticulture and flower farming is also wide spread. This is evident with the numerous flower growing and exporting companies along Entebbe road. Also, most households keep cattle for dairy purposes and the supply is usually sold to the near-by community. This has greatly helped in improving the nutrition needs of families, as well as supplementing family earnings. Fishing is widely carried out in Wakiso District due to the fact that the district has a wide access to Lake Victoria. The fish caught is both for food requirements and for revenue.

Wakiso District is endowed with numerous sites that boost its tourism industry:

- Its proximity to Lake Victoria has made it a major destination for tourists. The Lake shores of Entebbe have magnificent beaches, water sports, numerous resorts, world class hotels, as well as numerous fishing villages;
- Ngaba island with tropical rain forest is a chimpanzee sanctuary and wildlife conservation trust;
- The Botanical gardens with many species from around the world such as tropical trees and insects;
- There is the Kabaka's trail, which encompasses the most important site of Buganda's Kabaka. Traditional dances, music and crafts making are demonstrated as well as story-telling;
- As well as being home to Entebbe airport (Uganda's gateway to the rest of the world) it is home to the former administrative centre and capital of the then Uganda protectorate. Colonial Entebbe gives a rich history of old;

- Also, the Namugongo martyrs shrine located about 25 kilometers out of Kampala off Jinja road, is the site where 37 Christian converts were burnt to death on orders of Kabaka Mwanga on the 3rd of June 1886. Pope Paul VI canonized the martyrs on his visit to Uganda in 1969, which made the shrines an important site for tourists as well as Uganda Christians. There are two churches built at the site, one for the Roman Catholics and one for the Anglicans.

A brief history of pre-school W1

Pre-school W1 was started in 1999 with the support of a faith-based organization. This organization mainly works with Muslim communities, but the services offered are aimed at benefiting all children in the community regardless of their faith. Although the organization itself does not start ECCE centres, it helps communities to realize the existing need for education and care for their children and mobilize them to start these centres. For example the centre I visited, the first building had been built by three women, and the organization provided the iron sheets for roofing (See Fig 7.2). Later, local women came together, made bricks, which were later used by men in the community to build a permanent structure for the ECCE centre (See Fig 7.3 and 7.4).

On top of opening up centres, it is the responsibility of the communities to set up management committees as well as the selection of teachers to teach in these centres. This organization's philosophy is to enable communities to 'own' the centres and hence be able to sustain themselves. After the centre is up and running, a contract is signed between the centre's committee, the community, and the organization. This contract stipulates conditions (or standards) that centres must consistently fulfill, and the role that the organization is to play (professional and financial support) in order to ensure that the centre provides quality provision for children.

The organisation is experimenting with an innovative concept to supplement income to support community pre-schools. In order to supplement the pre-school's finances and ensure regular payments of teachers' salaries, the organisation proposes to communities the establishment of mini-endowment² funds for each school. The funds are centrally managed

² When a pre-school centre raises money from the community during the probation period and deposits it in the centre's account, the organization matches it with the exact amount of money the school would have raised

for maximum efficiency. However, each endowment is expected to consist of funds raised by the community, matching grants from the organisation and a grant awarded to each pre-school that successfully completes a contractual two-year relationship with the organisation. During this period, the candidate pre-schools and their management committees are expected to demonstrate ability to maintain both educational quality and financial accountability (as stipulated in the contractual agreement).

Although it was a community initiative, pre-school W1 bore the quality marks as defined by the international community, but qualities that were interpreted and applied in a Uganda context, using low-cost no-cost materials. As a result, this ‘contextualisation’ or ‘Ugandanization’ of the quality marks, made them economically achievable and culturally relevant.

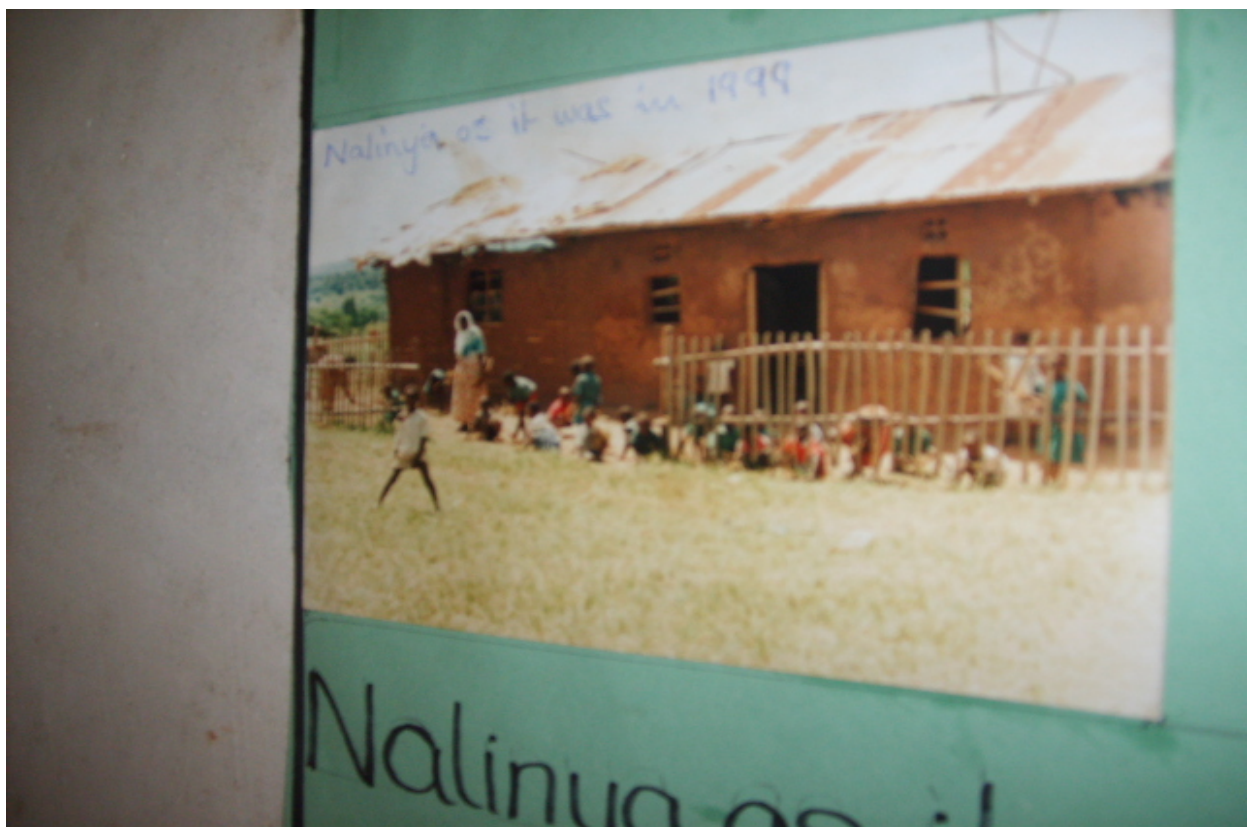


Fig 7.2: The first structure put up by women in the community in 1999

upon graduation. For example if the school manages to raise US \$500, the organization then tops up the amount with the sum of US \$500. The total amount of US \$ 1000 is then deposited in the protected account for endowment.



Fig 7.3: The second structure under construction by men from the community



Fig 7.4: The present structure

Pre-school W1's approach to providing quality and accessible Early Childhood Care and Education

Concerning the physical environment, the school was enclosed with a fence that was in good condition. It had a permanent play ground that consisted of mainly community produced play products. The outdoor space was used as an extension of learning, and it was equipped with a variety of playing materials such as old car tires, climbing frames, see-saw, balancing frames, skittles, ropes, as well as areas for sand and water play. By providing sand and water, the outdoor environment was bringing nature to children. Not surprisingly, during my visit, children curiously brought leaves from a near-by tree and played with them in the water (See Fig 7.16). The outdoor play fostered the development of children's gross motor skills by providing them with opportunities to throw, kick, skip, jump, hop, as well as their fine motor skills.



Fig 7.5: Children playing on a climbing frame



Fig 7.6: Children playing on a balancing frame



Fig 7.7: Children playing with old car tyres



Fig 7.8: A child playing with banana fibre ropes

With regards to the indoor environment, the nursery school was one big hall with adequate space for children to move around freely. The room was arranged into clearly and well-equipped learning areas. These included the book/reading area, the circle-time area, the clinic area, the home area, the shop area, the block area, the music area, and the art area. The water and sand area, though part of the classroom environment, were located at the entrance of the classroom. As well as being well equipped, all the learning areas were clearly labelled and looking at the pictures, children could tell which was the music or home area. For example, on the label or chart ‘music area’, there were pictures of children singing, while in the reading area, it had pictures of a mum and dad reading story books to children. Also, there was a variety of learning materials which were age-appropriate and clearly labelled. Learning materials were stored at a level where children could easily help themselves, a thing that reduced dependence of children on the teachers. Classroom arrangement in this school sent clear messages to children as to what was available for them to play with and where.

The book area was a quiet, relaxing place with a variety of literature. It was clearly labelled with pictures of a child reading a book, a dad and mum reading books to children, and pupils

in a classroom reading books. The book area consisted mainly of community made books, with a few purchased ones. Books were written in the local language (Luganda) as well as English. Children were free to pick and look at books any time. There were also reading charts and flash cards that were all locally made. When asked how the storybooks were made, the teachers said that they get stories from children, parents, and the community as a whole. Such stories are then compiled into books for children to read. This meant that instead of reading books about winter or the London Bridge, children read about things within their culture, community and country. By providing children with a variety of reading materials, children were being given the opportunity to explore the world of books and the chance to develop pre-reading skills.



Fig 7.9: The Book area clearly labelled



Fig 7.10: A child in the Book area reading a book

The circle time area was used to introduce the new day to the children. Sitting on the rag, teachers and children went through the days of the week and months of the year. It was also at this time that children were encouraged to tell the news as well sing nursery rhymes of their choice.



Fig 7.11: Teachers and children seated in the circle time area at review time.

At the end of the circle time, teachers and children sang a song that divided children into their small groups. As soon as the song was sung, children knew exactly which place on the rug their group sat. It was at this time that children were given the opportunity to pick which play area they wanted to go to, although they were free to go to any play area they wished. Also after playtime, children came back to the rug area and reviewed with their teachers what they had been doing in the various play areas. By participating in circle time, children's language, cognitive, and social skills were being fostered.

The clinic area was an area where children, as well as teachers came when they were not 'feeling well'. It was equipped among other things, with a stethoscope, empty medicine boxes, empty bandage boxes, a first aid box, a bed, and charts describing different illnesses that are common among children.



Fig 7.12: The Clinic area clearly labelled



Fig 7.13: A first aid box in the Clinic area



Fig 7.14: A 'Mum' has brought her sick baby to the clinic



Fig 7.15: A 'nurse' wearing a traditonal Ugandan dress (Gomesi) 'dispensing' medicine in the clinic area

The water area was where children played freely with water. They brought in different things like empty water bottles, flasks, and leaves. Since the sand area was located just next to the water area, children enjoyed mixing water with sand. In this area, children learnt about measuring, weighing, pouring, counting, floating, and sinking.



Fig 7.16: Children playing in the Water area

The sand area was a place where children played with the sand. Children brought in cups and sticks, which they used for digging, filling and measuring, and they also enjoyed pouring water into the sand. In this area, children were able to learn about texture, wet and dry, as well as heavy and light.



Fig 7.17: Children playing in the Sand area

In the home area, children engaged in role or fantasy play. It was a miniature home, well equipped with things like a bed, saucepans, plates, washing basins, flasks, a television, chairs, a dressing up box with shoes and clothes, dolls, handbags, brooms, baskets and pretend knives. The home area gave an instant feel of a typical Ugandan/ African home life. In this area, children experienced the different roles as they explored the unknown as well as the familiar through play.



Fig 7.18: The Home area clearly labelled



Fig 7.19: A child in the Home area 'peeling' food



Fig 7.20: Food being 'cooked' on a traditional firewood stove



Fig 7.21: A child in the home corner 'resting'

The block area was equipped with blocks of different sizes and shapes, as well as sticks. This area encouraged children to feed their imagination as they built replicas of the world around them. By doing this, they were learning skills like problem solving- as they decided what to build and how to build it, social skills- as they worked together and shared ideas among themselves; they cooperated, listened, and respected other children's views.



Fig 7.22: The Block area clearly labelled



Fig 7.23: Children playing in the Block area

The music area was equipped with things such as traditional drums, shakers, and sisal sashes (traditionally used in Kiganda dances and tied around the waist by dancers). In this centre, children were given the opportunity of experimenting with different sounds, as well as creating their own music.



Fig 7.24: A child in the Music area drumming a traditional Ugandan drum



Fig 7.25: Traditional dancing sashes in the Music area

The art area was another clearly labelled and well-equipped area in the classroom that

encouraged creative and messy activities. It contained different colours, paintbrushes, and stencils, all locally made by the community. By interacting with the materials in this area, the art area was fostering children's creativity, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, as well as acting as an emotional outlet as children drew and painted pictures.



Fig 7.26: The Art area clearly labelled



Fig 7.27: Different painting colors in the Art area

The shop area was the place where children came to ‘buy’ a variety of ‘goods’. It contained things like empty tooth paste boxes, soap and egg boxes, empty coffee and baby powder tins, as well as locally made foods, fruits and vegetables. By pretending to be shop attendants and customers, children’s language, cognitive, as well as social skills were being fostered.



Fig 7.28: The Shop area clearly labelled



Fig 7.29: Children in the shop area ‘selling’ food

The Mathematics area was well equipped with learning materials that fostered children's development of mathematical concepts such as counting, classifying, and colour. The area contained things like different shapes, numbers, dominos, and counting sticks.



Fig 7.30: Numbers in the Mathematics area cut from old slippers

Classroom arrangement was a reflection of the importance that the organization attached to provision of quality ECCE. This was because what I had witnessed in the classroom was in line with the requirements that the organization expected of the centre. In section 11 of the contractual agreement, it is stated that 'classrooms should have basic facilities, equipment and materials (including books) and maintain classroom arrangement appropriate to active learning'. Fulfilling this, the centre had a wide selection of toys and activities that stimulated children's interests. Ninety nine percent of the learning materials were locally made. Because most communities were poor, the organization encouraged them to use the available resources, hence promoting the low-cost no-cost philosophy (See Appendix Six for more examples of low-cost no-cost learning materials used in this centre). The availability of a 'rich' learning environment meant that curriculum was embedded in the different learning areas that existed in the classroom as well as the learning materials that were available. All the learning materials were culturally appropriate, except a few purchased books. Thus, there was a realization that the resources within the community could be used to offer meaningful

as well as culturally appropriate education to the children. Parents as well as others in the community donated old or unwanted things to the centre, which were used to equip the different learning areas. By providing learning materials, the centre was giving children a chance to learn through doing and imagination. As children engaged with the learning materials, they were learning about the physical properties of the world. Thus by touching, tasting, smelling, and re-arranging, they were absorbing the rich sensory information around them. And as a result, their brain pathways were making connections that will be the foundation for a lifetime of experience and learning (Curtis and Carter, 2003). Through this, children were building their social and emotional skills, language skills, thinking skills, and their fine and gross motor skills.

Classroom furniture was age-appropriate. Rather than the usual benches that I had witnessed in most of the classrooms, furniture consisted of small tables and individual chairs. Furniture was a scaled down version of adult chairs and tables. Chairs were located in the home area, as well as three other specific areas in the classroom where children went when it was time for writing. Children also freely lifted and took the chairs to other areas of the classroom like the hospital and the shop, depending on what they were playing. What I noticed also was that although the chairs were comfortable children did not spend a lot of time on them as compared to an average of two to three hours in the previously observed schools.



Fig 7.31: Age appropriate chairs and tables

With regards to discipline, smacking was strictly forbidden. This was in line with the contractual agreement that the centre signed with the organization. It is stated in section 11 that ‘corporal punishment should not be practiced’. Thus when disciplining a child, it was not treated as punishment but rather it was treated as a learning process. Instead of hitting children, teachers helped children to understand the required or acceptable behavior in their ‘community’ or classroom. Thus, teachers ‘responded’ rather than ‘reacted’ to children’s ‘bad’ behavior. As a faith school, punishment was based on ‘brotherhood’ as emphasized in their Holy book. Every time a child hurt another child for example, this particular child was called by the teacher, asked him or her what the religion says (we are brothers and sisters) and told that particular child that God was not happy with him or her and that he or she should apologize. This was done with calmness and children never resented when told to apologize.

Teacher/child relationship was warm. Children were visibly happy with their teachers as they interacted together. During play as well as teacher directed activities, teachers built on children’s interests by responding in ways that encouraged children to learn more. During teacher-led activities, children were asked to contribute and teachers respected children’s opinions about what was happening. Also during free play, children were encouraged to talk about what they were playing with or creating. This rich teacher/child interaction helped children to become aware of their actions, as well as knowing that they were part of a big learning community in which they were important and valued members.



Fig 7.32: A teacher playing with children in the Water area



Fig 7.33: A teacher playing with children on a balancing frame



Fig 7.34: A teacher playing with children on a seesaw

The school day flourished on classroom routines (See Fig 7.35, 7.36 and 7.37 for some of the routines). The distinct songs that teachers and children sang at the end of every activity differentiated these routines. For example, tidy-up time had its unique song that informed

children that it was time to put things away, as well as the time to go back to the classroom after playing outside. Children were so used to the routine that as soon the songs started, children had to leave what they were doing and do what the songs were requiring of them. Such songs helped to provide closure from one activity and prepared children for the next activity.



Fig 7.35: It is resting time after having snack



Fig 7.36: It is singing time



Fig 7.37: It is tidy-up time

Concerning teacher/child ratio, the centre did well compared to the average ratio of 50:1 in some of the pre-schools previous visited. At the time of the visit, the teacher/child ratio was 39:3, plus the head teacher who was ready to come in and help whenever she was needed. Despite an average ratio of 13:1 (10:1 if the head teacher came and helped), learning and teaching did not seem a problem. This could probably be due to the size, arrangement of the classroom-as it was attractively set up, as well as a clear routine that children had to follow.

Health and safety both indoors and outdoors was adequately observed: the school was fenced off, children were attended to at all times, and classrooms were not crowded. Also there were posters in the classroom, showing children what they must avoid doing; as such things put their lives at risk. These included posters warning children of the dangers of things like climbing trees, fire, and venturing into the forest (See Fig 7.38). Children had to wash their hands at all times after different activities and before eating, and there were separate toilets for boys and girls. In addition, all children had to present their immunization certificates on admission. What I noticed however was that like in all the other schools, soap was not provided when children were washing their hands.



Fig 7.38: A teacher keeping an eye on the children playing on a climbing frame



Fig 7.39: A chart showing children the danger of climbing trees

The school did have a well-defined developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant curriculum for all the age groups, which was developed by the organization's educators. The curriculum was also holistic and it clearly stipulated defined levels of achievement. The

curriculum covered areas such as understanding and using mathematical concepts, religion, language and literacy, environmental studies/science, creative art, songs, rhythms and qasida, health education, physical education, and social and emotional development. By providing the centre with measurable goals and targets, the organization helped teachers to operate both effectively and efficiently while ensuring that children's optimal development was being fostered.

The center used an active child centered approach to curriculum teaching. This was in line with the organization's requirement of the centre to practice an 'active learning curriculum'. Indeed children were active and were immensely absorbed in their learning. Children were encouraged to choose from a range of activities in the classroom, and the teachers came in to extend their learning. Even during teacher-directed activities, children were at the forefront of learning. That is, rather than the teacher generating knowledge for the children, the children were very much a part of this knowledge generating process. By ensuring that children actively participated in this learning process, teachers in this centre were allowing children not only to learn, but also to explore, realize, and hence reach their fullest potential. Thus, learning was a constant interaction between the environment, the teacher and the children, with the child being at the centre.



Fig 7.40: Children 'reading' books in the book area



Fig 7.41: Children participating during circle time

The school employed the use of ‘authentic’ assessment as opposed to standardized testing (See Appendix 5 for a sample of a child’s assessment form/report) in assessing children’s learning and development. Children were observed on a daily basis and the teachers wrote anecdotal notes (See Fig 7.42 and Fig 7.43). Thus, there was no monthly or end of term exams. This meant that instead of being ‘subject centred’, the assessment used took into account children’s holistic development. By employing the use of authentic assessment, teachers were acknowledging that learning and development was individual as well as being multi-sourced, contextual, dynamic, integrated, and collaborative.



Fig 7.42: A teacher observing and recording children's learning and development in the Block area



Fig 7.43: A teacher observing and recording children's learning and development in the Home area

With the issue of the language of instruction, both English and Luganda were used. However, what made this centre different from the previous ones visited was that it was not a ‘big deal’ if children did not speak English. Each lesson was introduced in Luganda (the local language), and English was brought in slowly as the lesson progressed. Even when children gave their answers in Luganda, the teachers praised them. When asked why this was so, one teacher said that this was the way in which children were encouraged to appreciate their culture and language. She added that what was important at this stage was to help children learn their mother tongue very well, something that would foster their learning of English in the future. Commenting on the same issue, the head teacher of the school said that teaching children in English only fosters cram work, as children pick and use the words as they hear them, but without actually understanding the meaning of the words. She cited an example of a child she was within a taxi. While conversing with his parents, the child said ‘mum, today’s work was extraordinary’. She said that although this child was speaking English well, she bet this particular child understood or could explain the meaning of the word ‘extraordinary’. In support of using the local language, the head teacher went on to say:

This is the best way of laying the foundation for children to find themselves. Using a foreign language actually does more harm than good to the child. By using English, children are losing themselves; losing their identity by denouncing their mother tongue, hence their culture

To this particular nursery school therefore, speaking one’s language was seen as in fact an aid to children’s optimal learning and development.

Teacher quality was also seen as paramount to achieving quality in ECCE provision. Although it was the community that selected managers and teachers to work in the centres, it was the responsibility of the organization to ensure that they were trained. Whether qualified with a certificate or Diploma from an ECCE training college, all teachers had to be re-trained by the organization. Teacher training programmes last two years and provide a combination of college/organisation’s resource centre and site-based training, extensive supervision and feedback as well as opportunities to work with peers. During training, trainees are required to spend most of the time of their training on the practical part (working in schools), while four hours in a week are spent on the theoretical part of the training at the organization’s Resource Centre. This gives the would-be teachers the opportunity to put into practice the theoretical

part of their training. The organization believed that teacher training helped them to learn about and hence employ practices and approaches that were appropriate to the age group of the children that they were handling. This belief was witnessed in what was practically going on in the pre-school; children were given confidence in engaging in varied and challenging situations. This as a result, helped children to achieve optimum development as far as their social, emotional, personal, language, and physical development were concerned.

The organization also viewed continuous professional development as one way of enhancing the skills and knowledge of teachers, and hence their performance. Teachers were required to attend refresher courses once a month, with the cost of these courses being entirely met by the organization. In order to encourage them to attend, teachers were provided with transport as well as meals. Also, there were exchange visits among centers, which enabled teachers to see and learn new ideas from each other.

With the issue of teacher compensation, given the fact that the centre was community run, teachers depended on parents paying school fees in addition to the dividends that the school got from its endowment fund. This money put together was not enough to adequately compensate the teachers. This concern was expressed by one teacher, who said that although she loved her job very dearly, as it helped her to develop as a teacher, she often got discouraged due to the issue of pay. She said ‘because of salary, I really want to leave. I love my work but when my children are at home because of lack of school fees, I cannot give a hundred percent to the kids under my care’. This teacher’s concern presents a clear indication of the extent to which poor compensation can affect the quality of even highly trained ECCE personnel.

As with parental/ community involvement, the survival of the school literally depended on the participation of parents as well as the entire community. As mentioned earlier, parents and the community participated in the putting up of the centre structures. In addition, they donated unwanted or old products to the centre, as well as being actively involved in making materials for the school like banana fibre ropes and balls. Also, parents were free to come into the school to see what their children were learning and discuss with the teachers. On big days like Id, Christmas, and mother’s day, parents were encouraged to bring in flowers and make cards with the children. What should be highlighted here however is that although the centre was set up for everyone in the community regardless of their faith, some parents did not want to

associate with the centre or enroll their children due to the difference in religious beliefs. Commenting on the issue, one teacher said that parents' fear was that their children would be indoctrinated into this particular faith. In reality, what I witnessed during the research was that this particular centre respected all children regardless of their religious beliefs and backgrounds, and emphasis was put more on ensuring children's overall optimum development.

Pre-school W1 was regularly inspected. The organization ensured that the centre was inspected by the organization's Community Development Officers (CDOs). Inspection was therefore seen as paramount to achieving quality provision.

And lastly, with the issue of school fees, the centre charged 20,000 Uganda Shillings per child per term (an equivalent of £6). Although the money charged seems very little compared to the amount charged in other pre-schools especially in urban areas, parents/guardians were still failing to pay it on time. But rather than demanding that parents/guardians paid the school fees in full at the beginning of the term, pre-school W1 encouraged parents to pay in, on a regular basis, whatever they could afford. In this way, children who would have otherwise been sent home and probably not been able to return were given the opportunity to continue schooling. This therefore gave children the same opportunity to access ECCE prior to starting formal education regardless of their parents' financial status.

The foregoing indicates that this 'model' pre-school has a specific approach or 'supporting structure' in its provision of quality and accessible ECCE. It has been seen that this 'structure' encompasses 11 areas. This study has been able to delineate, examine and illustrate this framework of influence, which can now be drawn up as follows.

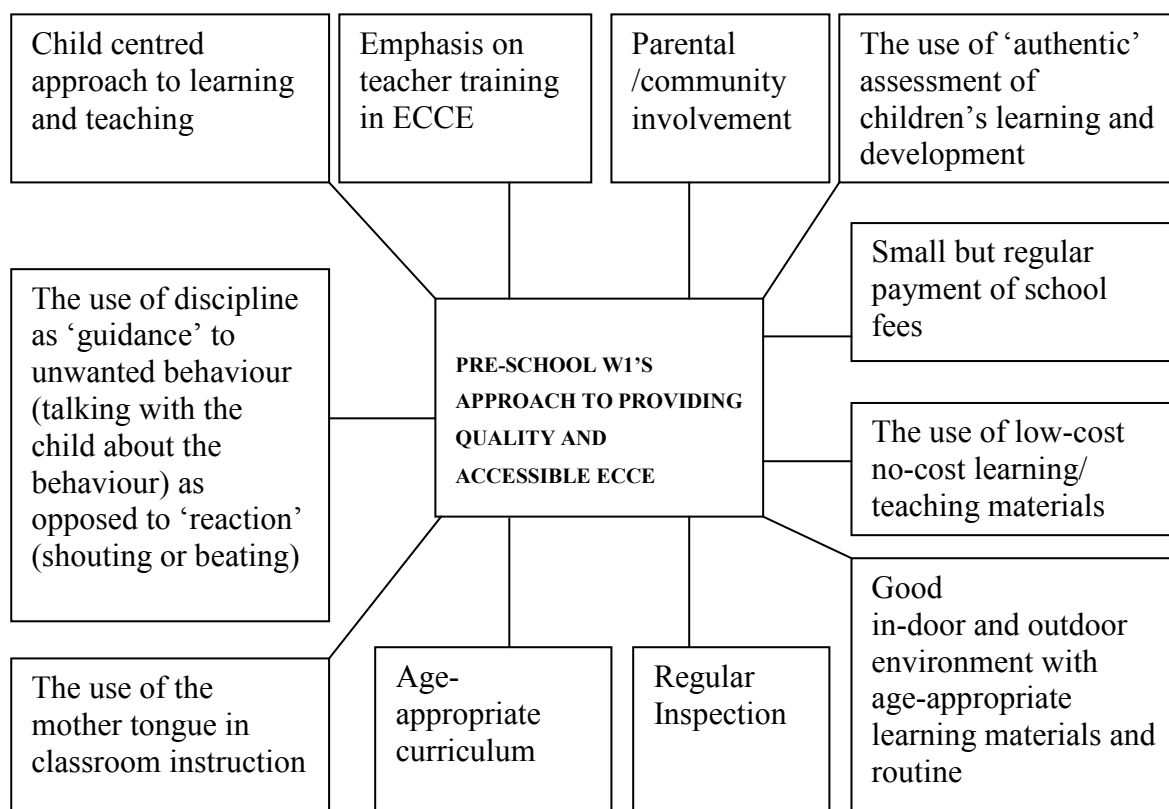


Fig 7:44 A summary of pre-school W1's approach to providing quality and accessible ECCE

The above supporting structure or framework of influence will become the basis of the concluding chapter (Chapter Eight).

Summary

This community based initiative to ECCE provision clearly shows that both quality and accessibility could be achieved with the use of a low-cost no-cost approach. The achievement of the programme in benefiting children in rural areas, who would otherwise be defined as disadvantaged, is remarkable. Children are being exposed to an integrated curriculum that is active, developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant. Also the use of low-cost no-cost materials, equip pre-schools with brightly coloured and culturally relevant learning materials that create a stimulating and cheerful setting vital in children's early learning experiences.

The success of pre-school W1 therefore, is a clear indication that community-based initiatives can indeed provide quality and accessible ECCE. If copied, and hence widely adopted and implemented by the government of Uganda, this approach will inevitably improve quality in ECCE provision while at the same time increasing the number of children passing through some form of ECCE prior to starting formal schooling. Thus, more and more children will be

helped to access primary schooling when they are ready.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Summary and conclusion

This study set out to investigate the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda. It explored the extent to which Uganda had expanded and improved ECCE, and raised the key question as to why even with international donor support and government commitment to institutional/ministerial changes ECCE is an area of education still encompassed with problems.

As discussed in Chapter Two, 155 nations of the world (including Uganda) agreed on a joint plan of action to fulfil six Education For All goals in 1990 at Jomtien in Thailand. The first goal required nations to work towards the expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE by the year 2015. The responsibility of poor countries was to make necessary budget allocations and policy commitments; rich countries were to provide both intellectual and financial support. Being a signatory to the conference, it was noted in Chapter Three that Uganda has taken numerous steps in the quest to fulfil the commitment to attain comprehensive ECCE provision. These have included the creation of the department of primary and pre-primary, legislative and policy initiatives such as the 1992 government White Paper on Education, and the ongoing reformation and restructuring of the department responsible for school inspection from 'School Inspectorate' to 'Education Standards Agency' (ESA) in 2001. All of these changes reflect Uganda's recognition of the significance of ECCE to children's development.

In spite of such efforts however, it has been seen from the 2000 EFA assessment report and from this research, that Uganda still faces numerous challenges, both internal and external, in fulfilling the Jomtien commitment. At the school-level research findings have shown that pre-schools are being operated with untrained teachers and teachers, with no curriculum, and with no minimum standards to follow. At the village level, lack of sensitization was impacting upon parents' decision to send their children to ECCE programs prior to starting formal schooling. At the district level, lack of funding from the central government was limiting the participation of District Officials like District Inspectors of Schools and District Education Officers in ECCE provision especially in terms of inspection. At the Ministry level, inappropriate funding and staffing was affecting how departments executed their designated duties. And at the broader context, lack of an ECCE policy, the decentralization policy, the

UPE policy, lack of government commitment in terms of funding, inadequate research capacity, weak networking and linkages among stakeholders, poor road networks, and inadequate international funding and involvement were all impacting upon the present quality and accessibility in ECCE provision.

This research has revealed that inadequate quality in provision is having far-reaching effect on children's learning and development. For example, the evident use of capital punishment is teaching children violent tendencies, fear and apprehensiveness. Also, because teachers frequently ridicule children, they are learning to be shy and generally lacking in confidence. Yet ECCE is about children; it is about laying the foundation for confident, productive future adults who are vital for Uganda's prosperity and development. In order to work towards achieving her commitment made at Jomtien 17 years ago, it is argued, that the government of Uganda should make changes suggested in the subsequent paragraphs.

Uganda should re-focus her approach to improving both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. The present study has revealed that at the moment, the focus has been targeted at the institutional level. This has been evident in the restructuring of the Ministry of Education and Sports to create a primary and pre-primary department. Such an approach it is argued is 'top-heavy' in that the changes have not trickled down to the operational life of pre-schools. There is therefore an urgent need for the government of Uganda to re-balance this 'top-heavy', 'lop-sided' approach. The findings indicate the most appropriate form that government intervention might take encompasses an 11 point framework of influence or supporting structure, which was summarised in Chapter Seven. These include:

- Regular inspection of pre-schools, which will help in ensuring that government set standards are adhered to by all providers;
- Emphasis on teacher training in ECCE will help in facilitating quality in ECCE provision. This is because well trained teachers have been found to be the single most important school-based factor in fostering children's optimal development (Knobloch and Wittington, 2002);
- The use of authentic assessment of children's learning and development rather than the traditional 'pencil and pen' assessment. This type of assessment is not only vital in the early years given the fact that children's development can be rapid, episodic and sometimes uneven, but it also helps teachers to detect early any learning problems or

disability, as well as establishing and honouring the diversity both in age and ability that children bring with them to pre-schools (Hill, 1992; Epstein et al., 2004);

- Child-centred approach to teaching and learning that puts the child at the centre of learning rather than the teacher. This is vital in that by engaging children fully in their learning, they are given the opportunity to discover new skills and knowledge and hence develop and reach their fullest potential (Newman and Rokos, 2005);
- Parental/community involvement not only creates a sense of ownership, but it also helps in highlighting the importance of ECCE;
- The use of low-cost no-cost learning/teaching materials help communities to realize but at the same time appreciate that the resources within the community could be used to offer meaningful as well as culturally appropriate education to the children;
- Appropriate indoor and outdoor environment in terms of space, age appropriate learning materials, low teacher-child ratio, and division of classrooms into different learning areas, is not only vital in ensuring health and safety of the children, but it also fosters their social (Chapman, 2005; Hughes, 1981), emotional (Moore, 1987), psychological (Jenson, 2000), and physical development;
- The use of mother tongue in instruction is very vital given the fact that it is very fragile at this stage and could be lost altogether if not encouraged in early years. In addition, using English or any other language other than a child's mother tongue, may affect children's cognitive and emotional development, as well as their general performance in pre-schools. This is because as well as demonstrating a particular child's culture and heritage, a child's mother tongue has been found to be a base for thinking, for the acquisition of a second language, and for subsequent reading achievements in a second language (Thondhlana, 1992; UNESCO, 2005);
- The use of discipline as 'guidance' to unwanted behaviour as opposed to 'reaction' teaches children appropriate and acceptable behaviour that is vital to society (Parenting and Child Health, 2007);
- Age-appropriate curriculum will help in guiding ECCE teachers in making sure that provision is appropriate, developmental, and of high quality (UNESCO, 2004).

- Encouraging small but regular payment of school fees and discouraging children from being sent home due to failure by their parents to pay school fees in full at a specified time by nursery schools, would benefit children especially those from low income families.

Re-focusing her approach to the pre-school level will be a clear reflection of Uganda's recognition of the importance of ECCE to her future growth and development. The changes that have been made so far could be described as more or less a 'reaction' or 'response' to an externally imposed agenda, resulting in minimal improvement in both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision. This shows, as discussed in Chapter Two, the limitations of internationally or externally imposed and supported policies/goals in achieving the desired goals at the national and particularly local levels. This is because, as explained by Namuddu (1991), such policies/goals 'derive more from powerful external...sources than from groups and communities within...countries' (p.52). And more importantly, 'the recommendations do not contain suggestions about some of the roles the communities, as the main stakeholders, see themselves playing' (Namuddu, 1991, p. 52). There is therefore need for the government of Uganda to come up with an internally driven, genuinely indigenous ECCE policy that puts into account views of stakeholders at the grass-root level such as head teachers, teachers, parents, and local council members, and the community as a whole. Such views are crucial in identifying problems that impinge on both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision, as well as finding solutions to such problems. This will help Uganda to set goals that are culturally acceptable and economically achievable.

This study has however shown that there is still limited public awareness on the importance of ECCE, which makes any attempt to involve stakeholders at the grass-root level difficult. There is therefore an urgent need for sensitization of the masses. Such awareness will in turn help to motivate public interest in support of ECCE. It may also change people's perception of ECCE, and educate the public about early education issues and child development. That is, communities will be made aware of their capability and the role they can play in educating their children. This has already proved a success under Madrasa projects both within Uganda and in other East African countries, benefiting children in rural areas who would otherwise be defined as disadvantaged.

The government should use the media in achieving widespread sensitization. Although the ability to use the media depends on several factors such as electricity, availability of radios

and televisions, Uganda is in a better position now than it was twenty years ago (Uganda Bureau of statistics, 2002). Radios are cheaper to buy and easier to operate without electricity (as car and ordinary batteries are often used to power radios in rural areas) (HEDON, 2004), and many Ugandans own or have access to radios. For example, over 60% of the population in urban and rural areas listens to some radio. Radio coverage has improved tremendously because of an increase in the number of privately owned radio stations. Almost all districts have radio stations broadcasting in different local languages.

Other strategies should include placing fliers/bulletins in shops and restaurants, providing information at community events, and local council meetings with knowledgeable people onsite who can answer questions. Sensitization could provide a foundation for the successful introduction of community-led pre-school centres.

But in order to ensure widespread good quality community-led preschools centres, these should be established through collaborative partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, the districts, and the local governments. Such collaboration has worked in countries like Kenya through ‘Harambee’ (self-help spirit). It is the responsibility of the communities to provide the facilities, pay the caregivers and organize food programmes and supply materials for play and learning. The government’s responsibility is to provide funds for training preschool teacher trainers and design preschool curriculum. The responsibility of the districts is to train ECCE teachers and inspect and evaluate the programmes. While local governments give financial and supervisory support to some centres (Kipkorir and Njenga, 1993).

Sensitization in particular and any other efforts to improve both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision inevitably requires investment. Yet as mentioned in Chapter Three, difficult economic conditions have dictated upon Uganda’s ability to invest in this sub-sector, perpetuating Uganda’s reliance on donor aid support. Although more help and commitment from funding agencies is needed, the government should come up with in-country funding strategies from both public and private sources that would work hand-in-hand with donor agencies contribution. This is because, as this study has shown, donor funding is characterised by short funding cycle, unrequited pledges, late funding, and ‘earmarking’ in terms of priority setting. Nationally generated funding, will therefore give the Government of Uganda room to ‘manoeuvre’ when planning for ECCE provision.

It can be seen that this study contributes to academic knowledge on quality and accessibility in ECCE. Basing on this research in Uganda, it is argued that quality and accessible ECCE can be achieved, but it will require three things. First and foremost, there is need for a national, 'Ugandan' approach to and policies about ECCE. Rather than being led by international pressure and policies, approaches to improving quality and accessibility in ECCE provision should be re-directed from 'top-heavy' 'lop-sided' approaches to a more 'locally-based' pre-school level focus. This will help in establishing and addressing culturally relevant and economically achievable quality targets. Secondly, it has been argued throughout that there is need for public awareness of the importance of ECCE. This will not only give rise to increased community participation in the establishment of community-based ECCE centres, but also the involvement of stakeholders can provide a thorough grass-root understanding of the key problems and possible solutions to quality and accessibility in ECCE. And finally, rather than looking to the West for funding, Uganda should develop in-country funding strategies from both public and private sources. This will help to remove the negative impact of 'modalities', these often being required by external donor funders especially the World Bank and the IMF. In-country financial sources will as a result give Uganda room to 'manoeuvre' when planning for ECCE.

All the above will help Uganda to accelerate but at the same time ensure ECCE provision that is of good quality and culturally relevant, to an increased number of 3-6 year olds prior to starting primary schooling.

It is argued that further studies need to be carried out concerning the effect of the current quality in ECCE provision. These studies should explore the voices of children and their points of view included. Such studies should focus, for example on the way in which, teachers' carrying sticks all the time and teachers' 'forcing' children to write 'hard' work on blackboards and in their books, are affecting children's perception as far as attending pre-schooling is concerned. This is because what this study has presented is from the eyes of the researcher.

There is also need for further research on children who have attended pre-schooling through to their early years in primary schools, to establish how such children are helped to be prepared for formal schooling, as opposed to those children who do not attend any form of ECCE program.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Guideline on how to determine the correct chair and table height



Appendix 2

International guidelines on how to determine the correct chair and table height

Desired total sitting height (cm)	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80
Seated backrest height (cm)	20	26	31	36	41	46	51	56	61	66	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Low adjustable leg	30 cm – 41 cm																												
Medium adjustable leg	31 cm – 41 cm																												
High adjustable leg	31 cm – 41 cm																												
Seated height (cm)	20 cm	26 cm	31 cm	36 cm	41 cm	46 cm	51 cm	56 cm	61 cm	66 cm	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 year olds	1%	50%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 year olds	—	—	—	60%	70%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3 year olds	—	—	—	—	70%	80%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	80%	90%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12 year olds	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	90%	100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3 year olds and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Please refer to page 155 for more information



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Appendix 3

Assessment form for licensing and registration of private schools/institutions

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS
ASSESSMENT FORM FOR LICENSING AND REGISTRATION OF
PRIVATE SCHOOLS/INSTITUTIONS

NAME OF SCHOOL/INSTITUTION:

TYPE OF SCHOOL/INSTITUTION: DISTRICT:

SCHOOLS/INSTITUTION: () 1. LICENSING () 2. REGISTRATION

No.	REQUIREMENTS	AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE
1.	Land Title		
2.	Lease Agreements		
3.	Bank Statement and proof of Financing (Loan)		
4.	Staff Certificate (Photocopy submitted by Teacher Education Department - Under 1000, 10000)		
5.	Partnership Decisions of the Association		
6.	Building Permit/Use Case		
7.	ECED Form (initialization form)		
8.	Headteachers CV's & Photo		
9.	Fire Alarm		
10.	Signed Contracts with one copy of terms of service for teachers. (Should be renewed annually)		
11.	School Certificate of membership of school approved by the Education School Management Committee/ governing Council		
12.	Finalized photographs for quality		
13.	School Inspection Report (detailed on teaching/learning process, management etc)		
14.	Health Inspection Report (detailed on buildings, crowding & safety and hygiene)		
15.	Children's Member statement of sharing assembly from the school area		
16.	ECED Certificate of Education submitted to the school as well as the school's Education plan		
17.	The sign approval of the government of the school institution sign post, students on assembly & in class, primary, secondary, tertiary facilities, outdoor play materials and school/institution buildings to government. After license is acquired & to registration		
18.	Building plan submitted to the relevant authority and approved		
19.	A letter of compliance from a member of NCEA in your district in compliance with environmental requirements (noise and guidelines)		

Observation:

Recommendations: () 1. Not Recommended () 2. Recommended

Remarks:

School/Institution: District:

Title/Designation:

N.B. The 1970 Education Act Section 17 states that: "No person shall teach in any public or private school if any declaration he is registered as a teacher or licensed to teach under this act".

Appendix 4

Samples of end of term exams set for children in pre-schools

(i) Top class Math exams for children aged 5-6 years

THE PRIME END OF TERM I EXAMINATIONS 2007
TOP CLASS
NUMBERS

Name: _____ Class: _____


School: _____

1. Listen and write.

(a) _____ (b) _____

(c) _____ (d) _____

Fill in the missing numbers.



handwriting
 and transportation
 * ~~Practical~~ Super
 Business


2. Write in figures.

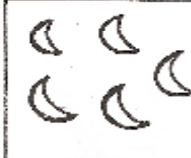
one - _____ four - _____


six - _____ two - _____

zero - _____

3. Count and write in words.







© Prime Educational Council 2007. Tel: 0512 283600. 0752 999854, 0772 451799
 Top Numbers End of Term I 2007
 HOLIDAY PACKAGES ARE AVAILABLE

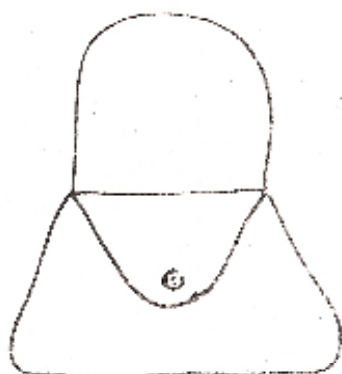
(ii) Middle class art drawing exams for children aged 4-5 years

THE PRIME END OF TERM I EXAMINATIONS 2007
MIDDLE CLASS
ART / DRAWING

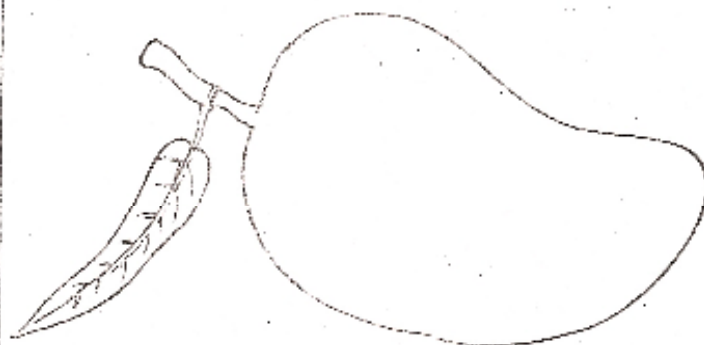
Name: _____ Class: _____

School: _____

Draw this.



Shade this



© Prime Education Centre 2007 Tel: 0112 383600 0752 998542 0772 412799
Middle Art / Drawing End of Term I 2007
HOLIDAY PACKAGES ARE AVAILABLE

(iii) Middle class English exams for children aged 4-5 years

2. Name these.



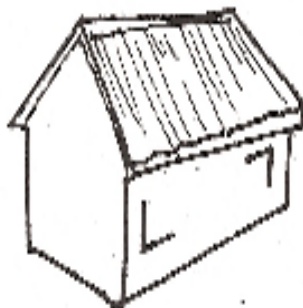






box, pot, cat, hat

3. Fill in the missing parts.




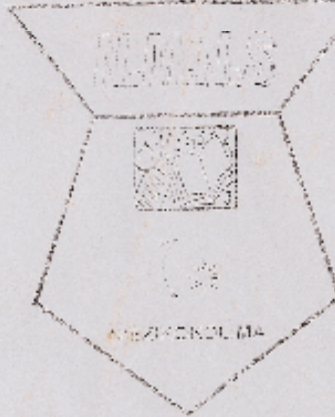
© Prime Educational Consult 2007, Tel: 0312 283600, 0752 991554, 0722 415799

Middle English End of Term I 2007
HOLIDAY PACKAGES ARE AVAILABLE

Appendix 5

A sample of an assessment form/report used in the 'model pre-school

CHILD ASSESSMENT FORM
NAILINYA MASTU RANKING NURSERY SCHOOL
P.O BOX 124 MATUGGA



NAME OF THE CHILD: Maime Tendo
DATE: 20th 14 12 2008

Understanding and using Mathematical concepts

She can count orally from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

She can count objects like stones, sticks, seeds.

Understanding and using Language

She can tell where Christmas is for.

She can read pictures.

She can write some letters in her name.

Environmental studies/science

She can tell things around our
Environment

Creative Arts

She can model with sticks, clay
block, seeds.

Songs, Rhythm and Qasida.

She likes to sing and dance.

Health Education

She can clean her dress.

She can wash hands before eating.

Physical Education

She can walk on balancing load.

She can run with tyres.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Expressing feelings

She can talk about herself.

Being sensitive to feelings of others.

She is sensitive to feelings for example
sickness, containers.

Participate in group activities

She likes to participate in group
routine especially planning.

Challenges of one-term needs
One-term cure of her skin needs

Comments: 1. 10/10/15

Response to challenges/difficulties
she asks for help. Senses a whenever
she is in difficulties.

Sensory preferences

She uses her senses eg ears, eyes
to know about something.

Attention span: She pays attention whenever

The teacher is telling a story

There is a significant difference between the relation and the parent

No agents agreed

3 pencils

2.3 BOOKS

2.3 BODIES
2.2 BODIES

4. Toilet paper

Next item begins on 21/15/2007

Next rate begins on

Term II. Change -- 10,000/-

Form II - 23500/4

Heartburn

2000

1925

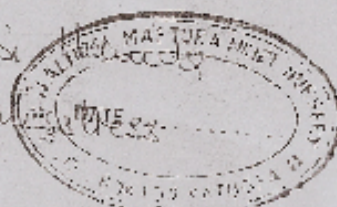
1994-1995

Questions are asked about the following:

Tendo mubizi mubizi wazayira abakira abakira
tuko. Muvuvuvuvuvu byagabaye kumubizi
Johannes atama kufurira.

Hanks

Head in



Appendix 6

More examples of low-cost no-cost materials used in the ‘model’ pre-school



A Jig-saw puzzle made out of a cardboard



Tree seeds painted with ordinary oil paint



Sticks painted with oil paint



Paint made from dye powder mixed with water and office glue



Shakers made from empty tins and seeds, and painted with oil paint



Shakers made from metal bottle tops

All the fruits, vegetables and foods below are made from old newspapers, and they are glued together using a cassava paste mixed with water. Once they are dry, they are then painted into the correct fruit, vegetable or food colour using oil paint.



A child cutting an 'Avocado'



'Pawpaws'



‘Aubergines’



‘Bananas’



‘Cassava’



‘Sweet potato’



Old car tyres made colourful using oil paint



Skittles made from old bottles and new-papers. They are glued together using a cassava paste mixed with water. Once they are dry, they are then painted using oil paint.



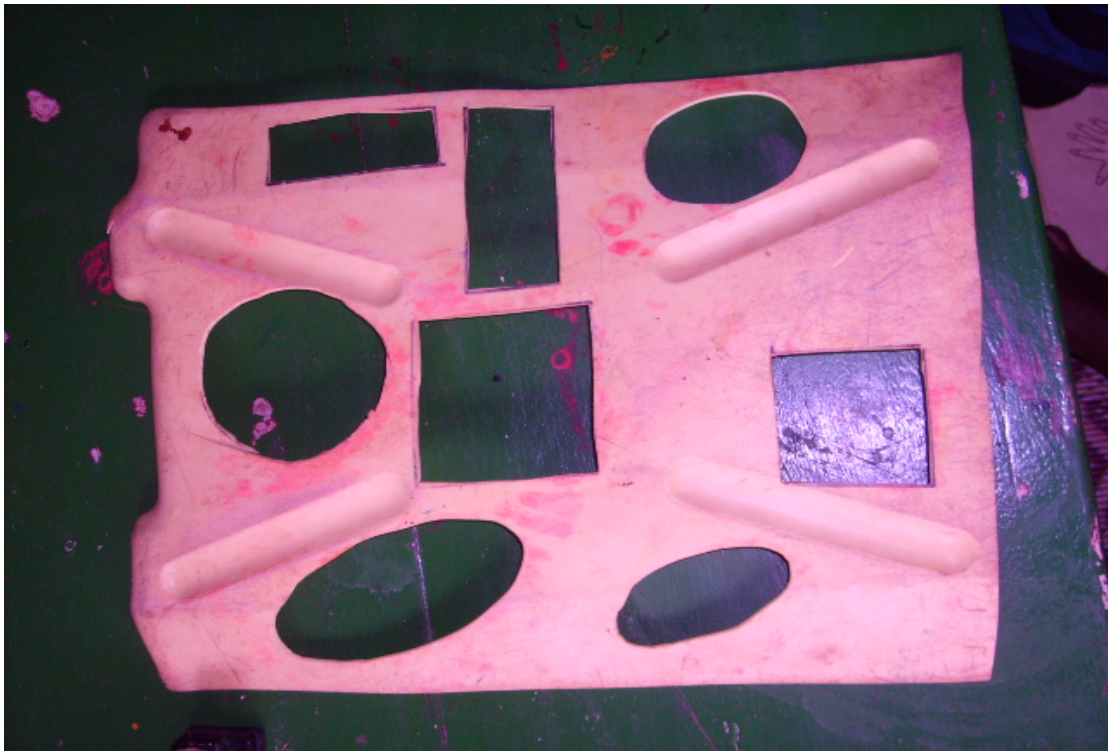
Ropes made from banana fibre



Ordinary stones painted different colours using oil paint



Sweet-corn cobs painted with dye mixed with water



A stencil cut from an old Jerican



Paint brushes made from sisal. They are tied together on a stick using a thread



A locally made table



Shoes donated by the community



Clothes



Old plastic flasks, cups and plates



An old television set



Old Lanterns



Old handbags



Empty water bottles

Appendix 7

Observation form used in the surveyed pre-schools

1. The physical environment

Indoors

- Safe
- Comfortable
- Clean

Space

- Adequate and the available space used effectively

Classroom arrangement

- Space divided into clearly defined learning areas
- Rooms brightly decorated
- Children's work attractively displayed

Classroom furniture

- Age appropriate
- Sturdy
- Comfortable

Outdoors

- Clean
- Comfortable
- Safe
- Age appropriate play equipment
- Sturdy play equipment
- Fence in good condition to prevent children from running out and strangers walking into the nursery premises
- Outdoor space used as an extension for learning
- Outdoor area suitable for running, climbing, playing games, swinging, pushing

2. The curriculum (overall quality)

- Appropriate and covers all the key areas of children's learning and development
- Staff develop a balanced program to provide varied learning opportunities.
- Curriculum planning clearly identifies what children are expected to learn

- Daily plans are a response to individual children's learning
- Child-centred approach to curriculum teaching
- Language of instruction

3. Assessment of children's learning and development

- Good system of assessment and recording
- Assessment is authentic and continuous
- Attractive and informative profiles are compiled for each child

4. Learning materials

- Age appropriate
- Books and other learning materials reflect the language spoken by children and their culture
- Well-organized learning materials
- Learning materials accessible by all children

5. Availability of daily classroom routines

- Routines are consistent

6. Teacher/child ratio

- Appropriate for the age range of children

7. Teacher/child interaction (Relationship between staff and children)

- The nursery has a warm and caring atmosphere
- Children are happy and secure
- Staff know children well
- Staff skill-fully support children and extend play opportunities
- There is provision of a wide array of play activities
- Play activities provided are appropriate and well balanced
- There is a good balance between adult-led and free play activities
- Children join in play enthusiastically and are motivated

8. Health and safety

- Attention to hand washing
- Isolation of infected children
- Supervision of children at all times

- Classrooms not over-crowded
- Availability of children's immunization records
- Availability of daily cleaning routines and schedules
- Appropriate lighting
- Appropriate ventilation (good indoor air quality-windows opened)
- A list of daily risk assessment to check hazards and risks indoors and outdoors before the session begins and weekly as well as termly
- Children supervised by adults at all times
- Names of adults who collect children from school
- Warning signs clear and in appropriate language

Food and drinks

- Stored appropriately
- Fresh drinking water readily available for children

9. School governance

- The nursery has clear set of aims, which are shared
- A comprehensive set of appropriate policies are in place
- The nursery clearly displays a development plan that is appropriate to its needs

Appendix 8

Individual interviews with Head Teachers

- What in your view is the importance of children attending pre-schooling prior to starting primary one?
- Do you use government-approved guidelines for establishing programmes?
- How clear and /or accessible are guidelines on the establishment of pre-schools?
- Do you feel support by the government in your endeavour to providing ECCE?

Inspection

- How often is your school inspected?

Curriculum

- Do you have access to the prescribed pre-school curriculum/ teaching guidelines? If not why?
- Do you follow the prescribed pre-school curriculum/ teaching guidelines? If not why?

Teacher qualification and/or training

- Do you have guidelines on teacher qualifications?
- Do you employ both trained and untrained teachers in your school?
- What do you say about formal training and teacher competence?
- What is your view on the nature and process of ECCE teacher training?
- What do you see as the possible effects of teacher training on the quality of ECCE programs
- How is staff turnover in your centre? If low or high, why?

Advice and support

- Is there an infrastructure of support and advisory services?
- If yes, at what level of government are they administered?

Parental and community involvement

- How are parents and community involved in provision in your centre?
- In your opinion, is it important to involve parents in their children's education?
- How important is it to involve the community in the running of an ECCE centre?

Appendix 9

Individual interviews with Teachers

- Do you see any importance in bringing children to nursery school instead of parents taking them straight to primary one?
- How do you as a teacher foster child development?

Curriculum

- Do you have access and/or follow the government prescribed ECCE curriculum? If not why?
- If yes, do you use the government prescribed ECCE curriculum?

Assessment of children's learning and development

- In your view, how important is it to assess children's learning and development?
- How do assess children's learning and development?
- Do you have government guidelines on assessing children's development?

Training

- How easy is it to access initial and continuous teacher training/ if it is hard why?
- Describe your teaching profession (the good and bad aspects)

Policy

- How does the ECCE policy or the lack of it affect your work?

Training

- How easy is it to access initial and continuous teacher training?
- Describe your teaching profession (the good and bad aspects)
- What do you think the government should to improve the bad aspects of your work?

Parental/community participation

- How are parents and the community involved in provision?
- In your opinion, is it important to involve parents in their children's education?
- In your opinion, is it important to involve the community in the running of a pre-school?

Appendix 10

Individual interviews with parents of children attending the surveyed pre-schools

- What are your views on the importance of your children attending preschool prior to starting primary one?
 - How do you judge/determine a good preschool?
 - To what extent are you involved in your child's preschool?
 - Would you like to be involved more? If yes how?

Appendix 11

Individual interviews with Local Council members

- What in your view is pre-schooling?
- What are your beliefs and values regarding pre-schooling?
- Do you receive any information from relevant government authorities relating to pre-schooling?
- Are involved in any way in preschool provision?
- What practical commitment do you make towards the provision and development of preschools in your area? (Budget, leadership, monitoring)

Appendix 12

Individual interviews with parents of non-enrollies

- What are your children not attending pre-schooling? (Beliefs and values)
- Do you see any benefits in children attending pre-schooling prior to entering formal education?
- Has anyone spoken to you about the importance of pre-schooling?
- If you decided to take your child to a pre-school, what factors would influence your choice of a pre-school?

Appendix 13

Individual interviews with District Inspectors of Schools and District Education Officers

- How would describe your day as an inspector?
- How often are schools inspected?
- Are those that cause concern visited more often and on an *ad hoc* basis? If yes why persistent poor provision?
- What is your criteria for judgement?
- What kind of penalties exist if the standards set are not maintained?
- How is the conclusion of the inspection reported? (Published and copy sent to nursery schools, or governing body and other interested parties)
- Looking at these pictures, how would you describe ECCE provision in your district?
- Overall what problems you encounter in your effort to ensure quality and accessible ECCE provision? If any, how does this affect quality and accessibility in ECCE provision?
- Can you suggest ways in which ECCE provision could, if necessary, be improved?

Appendix 14

Individual interviews with departmental heads and tutors of ECCE teacher training institutions

- Do you feel supported by the government in your efforts to train ECCE teachers?
- Are there clear government prescribed policies for teacher training?
- If the answer to the above question is no, where do you get guidance on the content of ECCE teacher training?
- Generally, what problems do you encounter in your effort to train ECCE teachers?
- In what areas would you want to see improvements/ increased government involvement?

Appendix 15

Individual interviews with Non-Governmental Organization representatives (local, national and international)

- In what ways have you participated in improving both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision?
- Are there clear government policies to aid your efforts?
- Looking at these pictures, how do you describe ECCE provision?
- Despite your efforts, why do you think there is still widespread low quality and accessibility in ECCE provision
- What do you see as the necessary steps that should be taken by the government of Uganda to ensure improved quality and accessibility?

Appendix16

Individual interviews with personnel involved in data management

- There exists limited data on ECCE provision, why do you think this is so?
- What problems do you encounter in your efforts to gather data?
- In your opinion, how is the issue of limited data contributing to the existing quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda today?
- What do you think should be done by the government to ensure the existence of a good detailed up-to-date ECCE data bank?

Appendix 17

Individual interviews with personnel involved in ECCE policy formulation

- The process of formulating an ECCE policy started in the year 2000 but the policy is still in draft form, what are the reasons for this delay?
- In your view, how has the absence of an explicit ECCE policy affected both quality and accessibility in provision?
- What do you think is needed to ensure its successful formulation and implementation?
- When finally implemented, how do you see it contributing to improvement in ECCE provision?

Appendix 18

Individual interviews with personnel involved in research

- How important is ECCE to children's learning and development prior to starting formal schooling?
- What role does research play in improving both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision in Uganda?
- Who are the major funders of your work?
- Do you feel supported by the government in your effort to inform both policy and practice through your research?
- Generally, what are the problems that you encounter as researchers?
- What should be done to ensure your positive contribution towards informing and improving quality and accessibility in ECCE provision?

Appendix 19

Individual interviews with personnel in the department of Primary and Pre-primary in the Ministry of Education and Sports

- In what ways has the government of Uganda participated in ECCE provision?
- What steps have the government taken to ensure improvement in the quality and accessibility in ECCE provision?
- Looking at these pictures, how would you describe the present ECCE provision?
- In your view, how has the involvement of international organizations like the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, contributed to the existing quality in ECCE provision?
- Despite concerted efforts by both the Ugandan government and International organizations, why do you think there still exist such pattern in ECCE provision?
- Do you think improvements in both quality and accessibility in ECCE provision lie outside Uganda or not?

Appendix 20

Individual interviews with personnel in the department of ECCE at the National Curriculum Development Centre

- For the first time in the history of ECCE provision in Uganda a curriculum for was successfully formulated but only 2000 copies were circulated. Why was this so?
- Formulation of Teachers' guide did not follow the implementation of the new curriculum, how do you think both limited curriculum in circulation and lack of teachers guide is affecting ECCE quality?
- In your view what have been the barriers to the successful implementation of the ECCE curriculum?
- What do you think should be done by the government in order to ensure its successful implementation?

Appendix 21

Individual interviews with personnel involved in producing ECCE teaching/learning materials

- How are you involved in ECCE in Uganda?
- Where do you get guidance on what is suitable for the different age groups?
- Looking at some of the exams you set for children, they look very hard and highly academic. What is your comment on this issue?
- As an independent organization, what drove you into getting involved in the area of ECCE?
- Do you have an association that brings you together as people who produce learning and teaching materials for ECCE?
- Are your activities regulated by the government?
- In general, do you feel supported by the government in your endeavour to offer guidance to ECCE providers?
- What do you see as the possible steps that the government should take in order to ensure improved quality and accessibility in ECCE provision?

Appendix 22

Individual interviews with an education psychologist/News paper sub-editor education section

- What do you see as the importance of children accessing pre-school education prior to starting primary one?
- How would you describe the present ECCE provision?
- The present provision has generally been described as inadequate, why do you think this is so?
- How best do you think quality and accessibility in ECCE provision could be improved?

Appendix 23

Individual interviews in Uganda

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS	
Honorable Namirembe Bitamazire	Minister for Education and Sports 15/05/07
Mrs. Resty Muziribi	Assistant Commissioner Department of Primary and Pre-primary 27/04/07
Mrs. Edinance Bakahena	Head of ECCE depart National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) 24/04/07
Mrs. Joyce Acola Otim-Nape	Secretary General National Council for Children (NCC) 25/04/07
Mrs. Joyce Khatundi Othieno	Assistant Chief Inspector Department of primary and Pre-primary Education Standards Agency (ESA) 26/04/07
Mr. Joseph Lubwama Ntege	Senior Inspector of Schools Department of Pre-primary Education Standards Agency (ESA) 26/04/07
Mrs. Maurine Bakinzi	Policy Analyst 21/05/07
Mr. Fredrick Edward Walugembe	Principle Statistician 24/05/07

NGO REPRESENTATIVES (LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

Mrs. Moses	Technical Officer Christian children's Fund (CCF) Jinja
Mr. Sam Tushabe	Founder/Executive Director Action For Empowerment (AOET) Jinja
Mrs. Hilda Nankunda	19/04/07 Manager sponsor and donor Ministries Compassion International Kampala 03/05/07
Mrs. Lydia Nyesigomwe	Director Action for Children Kampala 04/05/07 Programme Officer
Mr. David Kalanzi	UNESCO 14/05/07
Mrs. Hajarrah Nalule	Lead Teacher, Madrasa Kampala 22/05/07
Dr. Edreda Tuwangye	Education Specialist/Advisor Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia Together (KURET) Kampala 29/05/07

DISTRICT OFFICIALS

Mrs. Alice S.K. Kafukho	District Inspector of Schools Jinja 10/05/07
Mr. Abraham W. Hiwiha	District Education Officer (DEO) Jinja 19/05/07
Mrs. Catherine M. Mugenyi	Senior Inspector of Schools (SIS) Kampala 27/06/07

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES

Mrs. Monica Muheirwe	Coordinator ECCE Section Kyambogo University Kampala 24/04/07
Mr. Godfrey Nkoole	Deputy Director Education Section Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) Jinja 11/04/07
Mr. Francis Olinga	Head of Department Nursery teacher education/ Guidance and counselling Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) Kampala 16/05/07
Mrs. Hellen Sembera	Director/Tutor Jollen Nursery Teacher Training Centre and demonstration school Jinja 10/05/07
Mrs. Getrude Lwanga	Tutor Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kampala 17/05/07
Miss Winnie Muzaki	Tutor Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Kampala 17/05/07

LOCAL COUNCIL (LC) MEMBERS

Al Haji Nasser T. Sebaggala	Mayor City Council of Kampala Kampala District
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	26/06/07
Mr. Hannington Basakaana	Chairman Local Council 5 Jinja District 16/04/07
Mr. M. Menha	Chairman Local Council 3 Jinja Municipality 22/03/07
Mr. Ntate	Chairman Local Council 2 Jinja Municipality 22/03/07
Mr. Mugenyi	Chairman Local Council 3 Jinja-Buwenge (Central) 10/04/07

INDEPENDENT

Mr. Patrick Mukasa	Proprietor Prime Education Consult Kampala 08/05/07
Mr. Abbey Bwete	Skyline Director Kampala 26/06/07
Mr. Jamesa Wagwau	Education Psychologist and News Sub-editor Education section The New Vision Kampala 03/05/07